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Australian  
Bureau of  
Statistics

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Annual Report  
1987-88



# Australian Bureau of Statistics

Annual Report 1987-88



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Canberra 1988

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The Honourable P.J. Keating, MP  
Treasurer of the Commonwealth of Australia

In accordance with the provisions of section 24(1) of the *Australian Bureau of Statistics Act 1975*, I hereby submit to you, for presentation to Parliament, this Report for the year ended 30 June 1988.

Ian Castles

I. Castles  
*Australian Statistician*

14 September 1988



*Australian Bureau of Statistics*

*Mission*

*Our mission is to assist and encourage informed decision-making, research and discussion within governments and the community by providing a high-quality, user-oriented and dynamic statistical service; we will actively co-ordinate statistical activities across government agencies and promote the use of statistical standards.*

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*Notes.* In this Report after the first reference the Australian Bureau of Statistics is referred to as the Bureau or the ABS, and the Australian Statistics Advisory Council as the Advisory Council or ASAC.

The contact for any inquiries or further information on the contents of this Report is the Assistant Statistician, Coordination Branch at the Cameron Offices, Canberra – telephone (062) 52 5256.



## **1 THE ABS IN 1987-88: AN OVERVIEW**

During 1987-88, the ABS continued to maintain and increase, in terms of both quality and quantity, the statistical service it provides to Australian governments and to the community generally. Printed publications are the traditional medium for the release of official statistics. Statistics are also increasingly being disseminated through a number of other media, including a range of electronic media.

There were significant improvements made in the content and presentation of a number of publications during the year, especially by the inclusion of more comment on the statistics, graphs to illustrate the main features, and greater analysis of the statistics, especially by the provision of trend estimates. In addition there were significant improvements in the efficiency of publication preparation during 1987-88, with a larger proportion of the text, tables and graphs produced by computer means.

In order to provide a rationing mechanism for demands on ABS products and to recover more of the cost of disseminating statistics, the ABS, from January 1988, introduced charging for all its statistical publications (previously, most publications, particularly the small ones, were free) and market-based pricing for other statistical services. Both objectives have been met.

Throughout the year the ABS continued to release results from the eleventh national census of population and housing which was conducted on 30 June 1986. A highlight was the release of an extensive range of small area summary statistics on CD-ROM (ie on compact disk in read-only format) together with appropriate software for manipulation, tabulation and mapping by microcomputer. The product, known as CDATA 86, was developed and is being marketed by the ABS in contract with a private enterprise company, Space-Time Research Pty Ltd. This release is the first in the world by an official statistical agency of population census output on CD-ROM.

On the basis of results of the 1986 population census, population estimates for the period 1981-1986 were revised and a new set of population projections, to the year 2031, were compiled.

Following approval from the Government for planning to proceed for at least a minimum population census in 1991, the ABS issued an information paper giving preliminary ABS views on content and procedures for the census, and sought comment from users of census results. In the light of comments received, the ABS prepared recommendations for consideration by the Australian Statistics Advisory Council at a meeting in July 1988. A submission seeking a decision on the final content of the census will be put to the Government early in 1988-89.

During 1987-88, the quarterly national accounts estimates published by the ABS were enhanced by the addition of quarterly private final consumption expenditure estimates for each State and Territory.

A new international convention, the Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System, was introduced in January 1988 as the basis for the collection and presentation of detailed import and export statistics. The System was developed as a basis for greater standardisation in the classification of goods in international trade for customs, statistics and other purposes, and is being adopted in many countries throughout the world.

An agricultural finance survey was conducted in respect of 1986-87, and is proposed to be conducted annually in future. The last such survey was in respect of 1980-81. Strategies were followed to eliminate duplication between the survey and farm surveys conducted by the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics, and to maximise the usefulness of the data collected.

A new forward program of manufacturing statistics was developed during the year. "Full scale" manufacturing censuses will be conducted triennially in the future, rather than annually as was generally the case in the past. However, with some increase in other collections, the program will continue to largely satisfy the major user requirements which have been met in the past and will also meet most of the high priority user needs not met in the past. In achieving this there will be an overall reduction in total reporting load imposed on manufacturers.

Preliminary results were released from the 1985-86 retail census, and a survey of major tourism and personal services industries was conducted in respect of 1986-87.

Work continued on a number of fronts on the development of facilities for greater standardisation and integration of statistics. The first edition of the Standard Institutional Sector Classification of Australia was published.

Publication was commenced during the year of monthly preliminary statistics on labour force status classified by attendance at educational institutions, for persons aged 15 to 19 years. An information paper on measuring teenage unemployment was also published.

The first triennial survey of wage costs was conducted, in respect of 1986-87. It provided data which will be used to compile estimates of wage costs per hour worked and per hour paid but not worked (eg time on leave).

A program of major reviews was commenced to examine the demand for and the supply of statistics within several broad areas of social concern such as health; education and training; crime and justice; and social security and welfare. It is expected that these reviews will determine the future directions of the ABS in social

statistics in terms of its own work program and its coordination activities with other agencies.

Continuing consideration is given by the ABS to keeping its requirements of respondents to the minimum compatible with meeting the high priority needs of users of statistics. Specific steps were taken in several major collections to reduce overall respondent load in 1987-88. These included a significant reduction in the number of households included in the monthly population survey (from which monthly labour force statistics are derived), a sizeable reduction in the number of new retail businesses surveyed each quarter, and a large reduction in the number of private sector businesses in the quarterly survey of employment and earnings. In addition, with the changes introduced in the manufacturing census (see above), the full range of data is now collected from only a sample of manufacturers, resulting in greatly reduced reporting workloads for a majority of manufacturers. Further significant reductions in respondent load were achieved by the introduction of simplified reporting formats for all manufacturers.

In addition, a review of the statistical functions of the ABS and the Reserve Bank under the *Financial Corporations Act 1974* and of the statistical provisions of the *Banking Act 1959* has resulted in a reduction of duplication of work by the two agencies.

There was an increasing concern in some sections of the community during the year about privacy in relation to collection of personal information for statistical purposes. The ABS is very sensitive to this issue, and the subject, which is very complex, is addressed in detail in Chapter 3 of this Report.

There has been increasing interest by the media in the statistics produced by the ABS and in its statistical collection activities. This has necessitated greater effort by the ABS on media relations. Towards the end of the year the ABS had to respond to adverse, inaccurate media reports of proposals for a health survey. A case study prepared by the ABS's Director of Public Relations is included in Appendix 12.

During the year the ABS provided considerable technical assistance to official statistical agencies in developing countries in the Asia and Pacific region. The assistance took the form of visits to countries or regional centres by ABS staff, usually with fares and allowances being externally funded, to provide advisory services and training, and visits to Australia, by staff of official statistical agencies of countries in the region, for study tours and training.

A number of significant initiatives, including those outlined above, were taken during the year towards achieving the objectives of the ABS as set out in the first ABS corporate plan. This subject is addressed in Chapter 2 of this Report.

Agreement was reached with the Department of Finance during the year to a restructuring of the Senior Executive Service levels in the Central Office of the ABS. The new structure will be fully implemented in the first half of 1988-89. (The top structures of the State offices were reviewed about 18 months ago.)

The ABS has continued its implementation of the Government's administrative reforms, particularly in the fields of personnel management, resources management, accounts and travel. There were advances in implementing industrial democracy, equal employment opportunity, and the provisions of the second tier wage agreement.

## 2 ABS CORPORATE PLAN

The ABS Annual Report for 1986-87 provided information about the development and introduction of the first ABS corporate plan, including an outline of the ABS's mission, its corporate ethos, and its nine broad objectives.

Following the plan's release, it was discussed in small group sessions with staff at all levels in all ABS offices. These discussions, aided by a video introduction and attended by senior officers, proved valuable in stimulating awareness of the corporate thrusts of the ABS and were useful forums for the interchange of views and comments about the ABS's role and future strategic directions.

The nine broad objectives of the ABS, as in the corporate plan, are listed below. Under each is an outline of significant initiatives, during the year, towards achieving the objective. In many cases, more detailed information is provided in later parts of this Report.

- *The ABS will ensure that the statistical service is balanced, timely and relevant to the current and evolving needs of its users.*

Towards this objective:

- The ABS has continued its policy of pursuing close links with major users of statistics, for example by establishing and/or participating in high level, subject oriented advisory bodies or consultative committees.
- Major reviews have been instituted in the areas of economic and social statistics. These reviews are addressing both the composition and relevance of the statistics and the collection and compilation strategies required. For example, a review of economic statistics strategy has identified a revised set of collections in the manufacturing statistics field, to achieve a more balanced meeting of user requirements while freeing resources for statistical work on more recently emerging areas of economic activity. In the area of social statistics, efforts are being concentrated on setting clear goals for the ABS, clarifying its role vis-a-vis other agencies, and determining major activities/outputs such that the resultant data reflect the needs of users in the medium term.

- *The ABS will produce a high quality product.*

Work has proceeded on the development of frameworks within which quality standards can be specified, addressing such issues as collection coverage, response rates, accuracy of reported data, editing and imputation procedures, and timeliness.



- *The ABS will extend and improve its statistical services to users.*

A number of steps have been taken to provide a better service to users of ABS statistics, including:

- Development and conduct of new collections to satisfy recently emerged user interests,
- Upgrading the content and presentation of publications, in particular the provision of more interpretive comment and better graphical presentation,
- Increased use of electronic media for data dissemination, including the release of 1986 population census data on compact disk,
- Establishment of a small unit responsible for marketing, including research into needs for statistical products,
- *The ABS will coordinate the statistical activities of Federal agencies and, within the terms of legislative agreements with State governments and in conjunction with State government coordinating bodies, will fulfil a similar role for State agencies.*

Existing coordination mechanisms have been reviewed resulting in:

- Streamlining of the procedures and documentation for the "joint review" of statistical collections conducted or proposed by other Commonwealth agencies,
- A decision to update and enhance the Register of Commonwealth Statistical Collections, with the next issue in 1989,
- An "action plan" to improve the effectiveness of the ABS's network of officers outposted to other agencies,
- *The ABS will develop, maintain, implement and promote the use of standard classifications, frameworks and definitions to help ensure the compatibility and comparability of data derived from different statistical systems.*

There have been a number of important developments, including:

- Introduction of a new international convention, the Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System, as the basis for the collection and presentation of detailed import and export statistics.

- Publication of the first edition of the *Standard Institutional Sector Classification of Australia* (ABS Catalogue No. 1218.0).
- Continued review of the 1983 edition of the *Australian Standard Industrial Classification* (ASIC) (ABS Catalogue Nos 1201.0 and 1202.0) with the objective of implementing a revised, updated ASIC in 1990.
- Publication of the 1988 edition of the *Australian Transport Freight Commodity Classification and Australian Pack Classification* (ABS Catalogue No. 1210.0).
- Rebasing the *Australian Standard Commodity Classification* (ASCC) (ABS Catalogue Nos 1207.0 and 1208.0) on the Standard International Trade Classification, Revision 3, and continued development of the ASCC to extend its coverage to commodities originating in construction and services industries.
- Publication of the fourth and fifth editions of the *Australian Standard Geographical Classification* (ABS Catalogue No. 1216.0).
- Continuation of work on classifications and standards in the demographic, labour and social areas, concentrating on reviews of several basic variables used in the population census and ABS social surveys, and on the *Australian Standard Classification of Occupations* (ABS Catalogue No. 1222.0) coding system.

*The ABS will ensure an appropriate balance between the benefits resulting from collecting information and the costs incurred both by respondents (Government agencies, businesses and households) and by the ABS.*

Towards this objective:

- A small "forms" unit was established, and a document on forms design and standards was developed.
- A task force was established to examine how respondent load can be reduced, including by achieving greater standardisation of data item definitions, classifications, and reference periods across a wide range of economic collections.
- A separate unit is being established within each ABS office to coordinate and improve all collection related contact with large businesses.
- Many steps were taken to reduce respondent load in other ways, such as reductions in sample sizes, reductions in data content, and the adoption of respondent business size thresholds below which only minimal amounts of data would be sought.

- *The ABS will promote its services to those involved in investigating, advising, deciding upon and implementing economic and social policies, through the maintenance of active and on-going personal contact between its senior executive staff and Ministers, senior government officials, academics and other community leaders.*

ABS managers at all levels have continued and extended efforts to foster contacts with senior Commonwealth and State government officials and with major users in the private sector.

- *The ABS will foster the development of its staff to meet their needs and those of the organisation, with the main aims of increasing job satisfaction, improving productivity and enhancing career paths.*

Personnel development has been pursued on a number of fronts, including:

- Conduct of pilot projects to establish procedures for participative work design.
- Enhancement of development/training programs and practices.
- Fostering of the principles and practices of industrial democracy and equal employment opportunity.
- *The ABS will continue to look for more cost effective ways of undertaking its activities and for improvements in its productivity.*

The ABS has sought increased efficiencies through a wide ranging program of reviews pertaining to, for example:

- Use of improved sample designs.
- Changes to editing and imputation procedures.
- Internal devolution of administrative tasks.
- Increased use of technology such as computer assisted telephone interviewing and expert systems.
- Greater use of computer means for production of text, tables and graphs for publications.

To ensure that the corporate plan forms the basis for ABS operations, a number of steps have been taken, such as the following:

- The agenda for meetings of senior management have included reviews of progress on specific tasks related to the corporate plan. Reports on significant initiatives such as those referred to above have been the subject of corporate discussion and have prompted further consideration of strategies.
- Individual organisational units within the ABS have developed "local" strategies for implementing the more general plan.
- In regular reports to senior managers the heads of the various ABS branches and offices are required to demonstrate how the work programs for their areas contribute to corporate goals.

At the time the ABS Annual Report for 1986-87 was prepared, it was envisaged that the corporate plan would be updated during the first part of 1988. Feedback from staff and discussion between senior officers and the Australian Statistics Advisory Council has suggested that, whilst there is scope for future editions of the plan to incorporate some additional material, a period of consolidation is required and the present plan is not in need of significant revision at this stage.

### **3 STATISTICS AND PRIVACY**

Asking people for information about themselves, their families or their households is something of an intrusion. Whatever the topic, there can be implications for the privacy of the individual — a right which the citizens of a free country properly regard as theirs.

Yet in order to collect statistics about the Australian population the ABS must ask questions, including questions that some will regard as sensitive. The ABS recognises an obligation to try to balance the sensitivity of the questions to be asked against the value of the resulting data to users; privacy must be balanced against social justification. It is not easy to balance the competing pressures, because individual judgements — both about the value of information and the costs to privacy in obtaining it — will inevitably differ.

Although there is always an important privacy element in collecting personal information, the ABS takes every possible step to ensure that privacy is not compromised. This is done by keeping the identifiable questionnaires only for the shortest time possible before they are destroyed, by not retaining identities on machine readable records, by keeping tight security on all aspects of information processing, by strictly maintaining the confidentiality of the data, and by ensuring anonymity in the published or released data.

This approach maintains the public's confidence in Australia's statistical service, a confidence which is essential if the public co-operation required to maintain the quality and integrity of that service is to be forthcoming. The objective is to protect the privacy of the suppliers of the data to the greatest extent possible, whilst at the same time recognising that the needs of an informed society necessarily impose some obligations on its citizens.

The need to strike a balance between civic obligations and personal preferences is an important issue in all democracies. It arises in many spheres, of which statistics is one of the most important. In the debate on the second reading of the Census and Statistics Amendment Bill (No. 2) 1981, the then Treasurer, the Hon. J.W. Howard, MP said:

This area brings very much into focus one of the problems that any government faces, that is, balancing principles and conflicting priorities. I daresay that if we carried out a survey of a cross-section of the Australian community and we said to those people: "Do you believe that governments should be well informed and should have available to them a wide range of information about the habits, the wants, the desires, the assets and the capabilities of the Australian community on which to base, in a sound way, government decisions?" the overwhelming majority of the people surveyed would simply say "yes" to that proposal as being self evidently valid. I suggest that if we asked an equally representative group of Australians this question: "Do you believe that governments should ask a lot of questions

about your life, should ask intrusive questions, should pry into what you do, should want to know more and more about what you do?" the answer to that question would be an equally resounding "no". That in a sense is the problem that any government has in this area.

What we have tried to do is to balance those two aspirations as much as we possibly can. Of course we need information. Of course governments have to ask questions, whatever political persuasion they are. Of course we need sound statistical data on which to base our decisions in whatever area those decisions are. But equally there is a growing and legitimate community resentment towards over-intrusive government ...

The problem is not of course confined to Australia. Statistical agencies everywhere, and the governments they serve, have to come to terms with the fact that there is a conflict between meeting the needs of governments and the wider community for information, and the risks of intrusion upon the legitimate rights of individuals to personal privacy.

These issues were extensively canvassed in the Report of the Committee on Data Protection to the UK Government (1978). That Committee considered that:

Statistical work carries few risks for privacy because it gives information about groups of people even though the original data related to identifiable individuals.

but recognised that:

Safeguards are needed to ensure that statistics are presented in a way that does not reveal details of an identified or identifiable individual.

In Australia, the Law Reform Commission chaired by the Hon. Mr. Justice M.D. Kirby outlined a list of "Information Privacy Principles", in its Report No. 22. The principles related to the collection, storage, use and disclosure of personal information and thereby provide a useful framework within which to discuss the ABS approach to these important issues.

### **The collection of information**

#### ***INFORMATION PRIVACY PRINCIPLES***

##### ***Collection of Personal Information***

1. *Personal information should not be collected by unlawful or unfair means, nor should it be collected unnecessarily.*
2. *A person who collects personal information should take reasonable steps to ensure that, before he collects it or, if that is not practicable, as soon as practicable after he collects it, the person to whom the information relates (the "record-subject") is told:*

- (a) the purpose for which the information is being collected (the "purpose of collection"), unless that purpose is obvious;
- (b) if the collection of the information is authorised or required by or under law – that the collection of the information is so authorised or required; and
- (c) in general terms, of his usual practices with respect to disclosure of personal information of the kind collected.

3. A person should not collect personal information that is inaccurate or, having regard to the purpose of collection, is irrelevant, out of date, incomplete or excessively personal.

The statistical collection activities of the ABS are carried out under specific legislative authority. The *Census and Statistics Act 1905* provides, in part (Section 9), that the Statistician:

...may from time to time collect such statistical information in relation to the matters prescribed for the purposes of this Section as he or she considers appropriate.

Prescribed matters are listed in the Statistics Regulations. Among other matters they include the following:

- Population and the social, economic and demographic characteristics of the population.
- Health, health services and quarantine.
- Social and welfare services.
- Housing.
- Income, expenditure and savings in relation to a person, household or family.

In addition, subsection 6(3) of the *Australian Bureau of Statistics Act 1975* provides that each new proposal for the collection of information for statistical purposes by the ABS must be laid before both Houses of Parliament before its implementation, unless the collection of information is to be made on a voluntary basis.

Within the context of these legislative provisions, responsibility for determining the work program of the Bureau, the content of official statistical collections and the precise questions to be asked rests with the Australian Statistician. In discharging this responsibility the Statistician is able to draw on the advice of the Australian Statistics Advisory Council, a body established by the *Australian Bureau of Statistics Act 1975* and comprising representatives of Commonwealth and State Governments, community organisations and business. Since 1977, the Council has advised successive Treasurers, and successive Australian Statisticians on a wide range of matters relating to statistical services provided for public purposes in Australia.

Major users of data about persons, families and households include Commonwealth and State government departments which require the information to plan, monitor or support specific policies. Users also include research institutions, community bodies and other organisations who have a need for "statistical services provided for public purposes in Australia".

Requests to the ABS for collection of data must be supported by strong justification. Each request is carefully weighed against privacy issues, with personal sensitivities being given serious consideration. Apart from any other aspects, experienced statisticians are fully aware that answers to unduly probing questions will probably be unreliable.

Decisions regarding the extent to which questions seeking information of a personal nature may be included in ABS collections are not easy to make. Matters keenly sought by statistical users may cause no concern to the majority of people, but may be regarded as highly sensitive by some. Even questions which would be regarded as innocuous by most people are liable to cause offence to a small minority. To address this problem, and to establish what relevant data can be provided by respondents, the ABS undertakes extensive pilot testing of its questionnaires and collection procedures. This ensures, as far as possible, that the questions are acceptable to most of the people of whom they are asked.

The ageing and disability survey recently conducted by the ABS provides a good example of the problems faced. The Bureau was criticised in some quarters for including questions on what were described as "bowel and bladder habits". There had been strong demand for data on the incontinence of the aged and disabled from major Commonwealth and State departments, and from the Australian Council for the Ageing and similar organisations. Incontinence was seen as a main factor in determining whether and when aged or disabled persons moved from home-care to institutions. Pilot testing of the questions showed that carers and sufferers were willing to answer the questions, because they knew the problem and understood the need for government to formulate relevant policies. Undoubtedly the questions asked were sensitive and, when taken out of the context of the survey, could be viewed as too intrusive. The ABS decision to include the questions reflected a judgement that the benefits of the data being available and the respondents' willingness to be asked outweighed the reasons, on privacy grounds, for not including the questions.

Testing of the public acceptance of questions needs to be an ongoing process as public perceptions and attitudes change over time. For example, the 1933 population census included a question on "income" which was apparently acceptable at that time. Before the 1971 census a similar question was proposed but was rejected by the then Government, and there was considerable public discussion and debate about the intrusiveness of such a question at that time. More recently, the inclusion of such a question in the census has been widely but not universally accepted.

With the major exception of the population census, information in regard to persons, families and households is usually collected by interview. For this purpose the ABS employs a panel of carefully selected and highly trained part-time interviewers, many of whom are very experienced. They are mature, courteous, well informed and conscious of the rights of the householders they visit in the course of their duties. Interviews are conducted openly and no attempt would ever be made to obtain information by unfair means.

Again, apart from the population census, household surveys are conducted from a sample of the population. Selection of participants is based on dwellings, not the individuals who occupy them. Where an address is available, eg a dwelling number in a particular street, an advance letter is sent to the occupier explaining that an interviewer will call, describing the purpose of the survey being conducted and the nature of the information which will be sought. If for any reason it is not possible to send such a letter in advance, the interviewer will present it on initial contact. In all cases the interviewer is able to provide further information about the survey and to answer any relevant questions.

Every precaution is taken to ensure that interviews are conducted so as to cause minimum interference with household activity, minimum demands on respondents, and minimum intrusiveness.

In common with permanent ABS staff, interviewers are required to sign an undertaking of fidelity and secrecy. Except in remote areas they are not allocated to work near their home base where they might be known to some of the households they call upon. They do not enter dwellings except upon invitation. Except by prior arrangement, they do not make calls before 9.00am or after 8.00pm or on Sundays. They ask for names and addresses, but explain that this is mainly to facilitate personal contact and point out that respondents may remain anonymous if they so wish. If respondents prefer, arrangements can be made for them to provide information through the post or by telephone.

In the population census information is obtained by asking respondents to fill in the form themselves. Census collectors deliver the census forms to all dwellings. About 35 000 collectors are employed for each census and they are managed by an extensive field supervisory force. Each collector is trained in census procedures and is able to provide assistance and to answer questions. All census collectors are required to sign an undertaking of fidelity and secrecy.

In large urban areas census collectors' workloads are arranged so that collectors do not work in the area where they live. This reduces, although it obviously cannot eliminate entirely, the chance of their collecting forms from people whom they know personally. In less populous areas these procedures are more difficult and costly to arrange. When collectors are faced with a potential privacy issue they offer the householder a "privacy" envelope in which to seal the completed census form. Collectors must return all such sealed envelopes unopened to their supervisors.

These "privacy" envelopes are available to all householders, on request, regardless of whether they know their census collector or not. In addition, if any individual member of a household does not wish to disclose their personal particulars to the rest of the household, he or she may request a separate census form, and an envelope in which to seal it. The option is available for census forms to be mailed to the ABS.

To prevent disclosure of census information to unauthorised persons, collectors are instructed to take possession of census forms in person from householders and not to accept arrangements whereby the completed form is left outside the house at some prearranged location.

A substantial public awareness campaign is mounted prior to each census to explain the reasons for the census, the measures taken to guard people's privacy and the steps taken to ensure the confidentiality of the information provided by individuals. An information booklet about the census is delivered to every household along with the census form.

All information provided to the ABS is treated in strict confidence. Section 19 of the *Census and Statistics Act 1905* forbids past or present ABS officers from divulging information collected under the Act, either directly or indirectly, under penalty of a fine of up to \$5 000, or imprisonment for a period not exceeding two years, or both.

### The storage of information

#### *INFORMATION PRIVACY PRINCIPLES*

##### *Storage of Personal Information*

4. *A person should take such steps as are, in the circumstances, reasonable to ensure that personal information in his possession or under his control is securely stored and is not misused.*

##### *Access to Records of Personal Information*

5. *Where a person has in his possession or under his control records of personal information, the record-subject should be entitled to have access to those records.*

##### *Correction of Personal Information*

6. *A person who has in his possession or under his control records of personal information about another person should correct it so far as it is inaccurate or, having regard to the purpose of collection or to a purpose that is incidental to or connected with that purpose, misleading, out of date, incomplete or irrelevant.*

The questionnaires recording the personal information collected by the ABS are securely stored on all occasions, and the information is transferred as soon as practicable to electronic media for processing by computer. Names and addresses or other identifiers are not entered on the computer records, and the questionnaires are not retained; as a matter of policy they are destroyed as soon as they are no longer required for processing purposes.

This practice is followed for all personal records. There has from time to time been significant community debate about the ABS practice of destroying population census records. Some people have argued, quite vigorously on occasions, that these records are a national resource and should be kept without access for 75 years, say, and then released under normal archival procedures for research or historical use. The ABS has consistently defended the current practice as a means of giving assurance regarding the privacy of data about individuals included in census forms.

On the question of accuracy of data, every effort is made to obtain data which are as accurate as possible, commensurate with the costs of collection. However, quite often the best estimates of respondents are accepted because the information will be used only in aggregated form, normally as a set of statistical tables, which means that minor variations in the original data have little impact on the final results.

To summarise, the ABS does not store for any length of time questionnaires or other records which have identified information relating to people. There is no need for respondents to be concerned about the accuracy of any piece of personal information held by the ABS because that information is used only for statistical purposes. The question of access and correction, therefore, is not pertinent.

Overseas experience is again somewhat similar to that in the ABS. The Report of the UK Committee on Data Protection which has already been cited says that:

If information is to be used only for statistical purposes, and the safeguards to prevent identification are sufficient, we see no need for data subjects to be given access. Great efforts should, of course, be devoted by those responsible to ensuring the accuracy of statistical data, but we accept that it is not always essential, and often not cost-effective for statistical purposes, to attempt to ensure absolute accuracy. In consequence, we see no need for individuals to have a general right to correct errors in data held about them for statistical purposes alone. It is difficult to see how an individual can be harmed by the use of inaccurate data about him in a statistical analysis in which he cannot be identified.

### The use of information

#### **INFORMATION PRIVACY PRINCIPLES**

##### *Use of Personal Information*

7. *Personal information should not be used except for a purpose to which it is relevant.*

8. *Personal information should not be used for a purpose that is not the purpose of collection or a purpose incidental to or connected with that purpose unless:*

(a) *the record-subject has consented to the use;*

(b) the person using the information believes on reasonable grounds that the use is necessary to prevent or lessen a serious and imminent threat to the life or health of the record-subject or of some other person; or

(c) the use is required by or under law.

9. A person who uses personal information should take reasonable steps to ensure that, having regard to the purpose for which the information is being used, the information is accurate, complete and up to date.

As mentioned above, people who are asked to provide information to the ABS are told in general terms why it is being collected. They are also told that it will be used for statistical purposes only. This is usually done prior to the survey and in writing. Although the statistical purposes may not be fully anticipated at the time that the data are collected, all of the purposes for which the data are eventually used must comply with the strict provisions of the *Census and Statistics Act 1905*.

Of course the use of personal information for purposes other than for compiling statistics is prevented by the confidentiality provisions (Section 19) of the *Census and Statistics Act 1905*. Personal information cannot be passed on by the ABS to any other person or organisation, including any other government agency. The Act thereby prevents the use of information collected for statistical purpose for any administrative or regulatory purpose.

Again the legislative requirements and administration practices in Australia are in accord with those which exist in countries with similar traditions to our own. The Report of the UK Committee on Data Protection already cited said:

Where information is collected purely for statistical analysis we believe that, in order to let the subject know why the data are required and how they will be handled, it is sufficient for him to be told that the information is required "for statistical purposes" or "to compile statistics", and so on, and to be informed in general terms about the overall purpose of the enquiry. We think it is unnecessary for the subject to be given comprehensive details, at the time of collection, about how the information will be used and who will have access to it - though he should have the right to obtain this knowledge in general terms on request insofar as it is known at the time. ....

.....

In most cases it would be impossible to specify at the time of collection of the data all the tabulations or analyses that might subsequently be undertaken. Moreover, it would not be feasible to approach each individual for his permission to use data whenever a new analysis is contemplated. While we accept that the individual should be able to find out in general terms what use has been made of information provided by him, it must be recognised that when the information is used for statistical purposes it would often be extremely costly, or even impossible, to specify in detail all the uses that have been made of a particular piece of information. Moreover,

such use cannot directly affect the individual concerned. In a statistical context, therefore, there is no need to allow the subject to find out what has been done with the information.

## The disclosure of information

### ***INFORMATION PRIVACY PRINCIPLES***

#### ***Disclosure of Personal Information***

*10. A person should not disclose personal information about some other person to a third person unless:*

- (a) the record-subject has consented to the disclosure;*
- (b) the person disclosing the information believes on reasonable grounds that the disclosure is necessary to prevent or lessen a serious and imminent threat to the life or health of the record-subject or of some other person; or*
- (c) the disclosure is required by or under law.*

No personal information, is kept by the ABS for any extended period, and the ABS is required by legislation to ensure that identifiable information is not published or released. The ABS is proud of its record of maintaining the confidentiality of the information it has collected.

## Legal obligation of respondents

Under the provisions of the *Census and Statistics Act 1905* respondents may have a legal obligation to supply data for statistical purposes. It has been suggested from time to time that to assist in resolving the conflict between the rights of the community to have statistics for decision making and the desire of individuals to safeguard their personal privacy, the ABS should only collect such information on a voluntary basis. The resolution of this issue turns on two questions: first, "Would collecting data on a voluntary basis have significant impact on the statistics required for community purposes?" and second, "What impact does the legal obligation of respondents to provide data have on considerations of personal privacy?".

On the first question there can be no doubt that there would be a significant drop in response rates which would have a very large impact on the statistical product. The size of that impact would, of course, vary according to a number of factors including the type of data being collected and the specific approach adopted to collect the information voluntarily. This means that not only would the estimates at a particular time be affected, but that movements in the estimates over time would also be influenced in differing and almost certainly unknown ways.

Recent experience in the Federal Republic of Germany is particularly illuminating in this respect. In 1985 the Lower House of the German Federal Parliament passed a

resolution requesting the Federal Government to report on the experience of surveys of the population and the labour market under the Microcensus Act 1985, including on whether it would be possible to do without surveys under this Act and replace them by some other method.

In order to assist the Government in responding to this request, the Federal and State Departments of Statistics conducted sample surveys of households between 1985 and 1987 on two bases: surveys where the respondents had an obligation to provide information, and test surveys with the voluntary supply of information. A comparison of the experience from both types of survey formed the basis of a report by the Government to the Parliament in January 1988. The comparison was summarised as follows:

The response rate of 65% achieved by the official statistics on the basis of non-obligatory test surveys is of comparable magnitude to the proportions obtained by the social sciences in similar polls. Hence .... non-response in the order of 35% would have to be expected if the obligation to give information is dispensed with.

The non-response percentage in the 1985 Microcensus test survey has led to biases in the findings which would not be reduced by procedures of estimation and analysis. Evaluations to date have shown that the findings of the 1985 Microcensus test survey are not able to be compared with those of the Microcensus main survey. Findings on gainful employment, the professional position of employed persons, the schooling or professional training of the population, as well as household and family, are especially distorted.

... Based on current knowledge, if the obligation to give information is rescinded, the Microcensus would not fulfil the function allotted to it ... This would have consequences for the entire statistical system ... The findings of extensive investigations carried out up to now, do not permit the Microcensus to be implemented in the form of a non-obligatory survey: Neither can the Microcensus be replaced by any other statistics. There are no other less costly procedures which would be equal to, or better than, the microcensus methods which necessitate the retrieval of compulsorily obtained information.

... Federal Departments as well as representatives from the Scientific and Economic communities have substantiated in detail the necessity of the Microcensus for carrying out their tasks. Requests directed to the Microcensus ... confirm the great demand for access to information from all sections of the Microcensus ... These observations about the necessity for the Microcensus refer to the entire survey program. It cannot therefore, be suggested that any part of this program should be rescinded ... In some areas ... it becomes apparent that additional information is required which is not contained in the Microcensus survey program as it now stands. In these

cases corresponding additions should be taken into consideration during amendments to the Microcensus Act.

It cannot, of course, be assumed that the findings of this investigation in the Federal Republic of Germany would apply in their totality in Australian circumstances. The results must, however, be regarded as significant – particularly when account is taken of the thoroughness of the study, the unambiguous nature of the technical conclusions and the strong support of the Government for the maintenance of compulsion in a country in which there are strong concerns for individual privacy.

The second question of the relationship of legal obligation to respond to statistical surveys with considerations of personal privacy is a large one. It is certainly not a question to be resolved by statisticians.

It is, however, relevant to note three authoritative Australian statements of view on the matter.

The 1983–84 Annual Report of the Commonwealth Ombudsman included the following comment in relation to a respondent in the population survey:

We did not consider the Bureau's actions in proceeding with the inclusion of the complainant in the survey as oppressive, or for that matter unreasonable, .... We took the opportunity to assure the complainant that any information supplied to the Bureau pursuant to the Census and Statistics Act 1905 was required to be treated in the strictest confidence. Though there may be occasions in which it is oppressive not to excuse a citizen from the discharge of civic obligations owed by the community at large, it is incumbent upon members of the community to accept the responsibilities as well as the obligations of members of our society, and in these circumstances it would be only in fairly exceptional cases that I could characterise official action properly taken pursuant to statutory powers as being oppressive.

Second, in November 1984 the then Attorney General, Senator the Hon. G.J. Evans, QC, in a letter to a member of Parliament, answered a query about alleged ABS violation of a person's civil rights in the following terms:

The collection of information by the Commonwealth Statistician under the Census and Statistics Act is not unlawful. Whether the collection of the information is an arbitrary interference with privacy will depend upon a number of factors, including the purpose for which the information is sought, the need for the information by the government and the subsequent proposed use of the information. Provided the information sought is such that the Statistician may lawfully acquire it in pursuance of his powers under the Census and Statistics Act, the collection of that information is unlikely to amount to an arbitrary interference with privacy.

Third, in a letter to the Australian Statistician dated 13 July 1988 the New South Wales Privacy Committee commented on the existence of powers to compel the answering of questions as follows:

The Privacy Committee's approach is to balance any invasion of privacy with the social justification for the collection of the information. Accordingly it recognises that there is a need for the collection of statistical information on a statewide basis, and that the ABS has a valuable role to play in this area. The existence of powers to compel the provision of information allows a random sample of the population to be questioned. The Committee does not oppose the existence of such a power.

### **Conclusion**

Privacy is an elusive concept. The Australian Law Reform Commission referred to attempts to define privacy. It said, in part:

None (of the attempts to define privacy) is completely satisfactory. In part, this is because privacy is a collection of related interests and expectations, rather than a single coherent concept. Claims to privacy must be seen in the appropriate context, as an expression of the claim that all human rights be appropriately respected.

Further the Law Reform Commission went on to say:

..... any claim by an individual to preserve his own integrity by ensuring respect for his privacy must be considered against similar, equally justified claims by other individuals. It must also be considered against the need to help society at large in its efforts to improve the lot of individuals within it by ensuring the efficient running of government, industry, commerce, professional activity and research. None of these can be completely ignored. Privacy is but one of a number of human rights. Privacy protection should not ignore other legitimate interests.

The ABS seeks to achieve this balance; the task, however, is difficult not the least because the expectations of suppliers of data and users of statistics are so different and individuals themselves have widely different interests and views.

On the risk to privacy of using personal information for statistical purposes, the Report of the UK Committee on Data Protection again summarised the Australian position very well when it said:

The essential characteristic of statistical data is that they are concerned with groups of individuals and not with individuals themselves. Although usually compiled from records relating to individual persons, households, businesses, and so on, statistical information relates only to groups and is

not intended to reveal information about the identifiable individuals of which the groups are composed. It follows that the use of personal information for statistical purposes carries few risks for privacy, provided that precautions are taken, appropriate to the type of statistical activity, to prevent the disclosure of personal information about identifiable individuals.

## **4 PROGRAM BUDGETING – ABS PROGRAM**

### **PROGRAM BUDGETING STRUCTURE**

Under program budgeting arrangements the work of the ABS constitutes a single program, with two sub-programs, *statistical operations* and *corporate services*. In 1987–88 these sub-programs were split into 36 components and 101 sub-components.

A schematic presentation of the ABS program budgeting structure is shown in Appendix 1, and its relationship with the ABS organisation structure is shown in Appendix 2. The objective, a description, and a report of the operations and performance of the ABS program are given in this chapter. Information about the sub-programs and components is given in Chapters 5 and 6.

#### **OBJECTIVE**

*The objective of the ABS program is to provide a high quality, user-oriented and dynamic statistical service for governments and the community to assist and encourage informed decision making, research and discussion.*

#### **DESCRIPTION**

The principal legislation determining the functions and responsibilities of the Australian Bureau of Statistics is:

*Australian Bureau of Statistics Act 1975*  
*Statistics (Arrangements with States) Act 1956*  
*Census and Statistics Act 1905*

The ABS is the central statistical authority for the Commonwealth Government and, under the Government-to-Government Arrangements entered into with the States pursuant to the *Statistics (Arrangements with States) Act 1956*, provides statistical services for the State governments. The functions of the ABS are defined in section 6 of the *Australian Bureau of Statistics Act 1975* as follows:

- "(a) to constitute the central statistical authority for the Australian Government and, by arrangements with the Governments of the States, provide statistical services for those Governments;
- (b) to collect, compile, analyse and disseminate statistics and related information;

- (c) to ensure coordination of the operations of official bodies in the collection, compilation and dissemination of statistics and related information, with particular regard to -
  - (i) the avoidance of duplication in the collection by official bodies of information for statistical purposes;
  - (ii) the attainment of compatibility between, and the integration of, statistics compiled by official bodies; and
  - (iii) the maximum possible utilization, for statistical purposes, of information, and means of collection of information, available to official bodies;
- (d) to formulate, and ensure compliance with, standards for the carrying out by official bodies of operations for statistical purposes;
- (e) to provide advice and assistance to official bodies in relation to statistics; and
- (f) to provide liaison between Australia, on the one hand, and other countries and international organisations, on the other hand, in relation to statistical matters."

In order to provide official statistics, the ABS undertakes a large number of separate collections, ranging from periodic censuses of industry to regular surveys to provide current economic indicators, and from the population census to household surveys on specific social or economic issues. In addition, the ABS devotes considerable efforts, in close co-operation with Commonwealth and State administrative agencies, to producing statistics as a by-product of administrative systems. Also, the ABS must keep in touch with users of statistics regarding their statistical requirements and with respondents to collections regarding their ability to provide data.

Each field of statistics is the responsibility of a subject matter unit and these units maintain ongoing contact with suppliers and users of data through means such as standing committees, user groups, conferences and seminars of representative organisations, and through day-to-day contact in the course of collecting and disseminating data. ABS officers outposted to government departments and authorities also play an important part in these respects.

At the highest level, the Australian Statistics Advisory Council, which was established by the *Australian Bureau of Statistics Act 1975*, plays an active role in advising upon the direction and priorities of the ABS work program. The activities of the Advisory Council are described in its annual report to Parliament. The annual Conference of Statisticians, held in accordance with the Government-to-Government Arrangements under the *Statistics (Arrangements with States) Act 1956*, is a forum in which matters bearing on the relationship between the ABS and State governments are discussed. The Deputy Commonwealth Statisticians in

charge of the State offices of the ABS and the Statistician, Northern Territory, participate in the Conference and, since the early 1980s, an official from each State and the Northern Territory has been invited to attend. In addition, a government statistical coordination and consultative mechanism operates in each State and the Northern Territory.

As the national statistical organisation the ABS has a broad role, and every effort is made to meet the information requirements not only of Commonwealth, State and Territory governments but also of the community at large. In releasing statistics, the ABS follows the long established principle that data should be made available as soon as practicable and should be equally accessible to all users.

Many government programs depend directly on statistics produced by the ABS – both policy and operational decisions are based on ABS figures. Most of the major government programs are evaluated by means of official statistics – macro-economic and micro-economic change, and social and demographic change are all measured by the Bureau.

# FINANCIAL AND STAFFING RESOURCES

## FINANCIAL AND STAFFING RESOURCES, BY APPROPRIATION ITEM AND PROGRAM ELEMENT, 1987-88 AND 1988-89 ESTIMATES

	1987-88 (Actual)			1988-89 (Estimates)		
	Statistical operations sub- program	Corporate services sub- program	ABS program	Statistical operations sub- program	Corporate services sub- program	ABS program
	\$'000					
Running costs (a) -						
Salaries	76 595	21 204	97 799	82 795	14 571	97 366
Administrative expenses	14 817	13 348	28 166	18 826	11 785	30 611
Compensation and legal expenses	..	1 393	1 393	..	714	714
Plant and equipment	3 629	..	3 629	4 872	..	4 872
Special appropriations (a) -						
Australian Statistician	..	94	94	..	(a)	(a)
ASAC	..	18	18	..	(a)	(a)
Total expenditure	95 041	36 058	131 098	106 493	27 070	133 563
LESS revenue	3 228	..	3 228	5 020	..	5 020
Total outlays	91 813	36 058	127 870	101 473	27 070	128 543
	Number					
Staff years	2 965.7	(b) 704.3	3 670.0	(b) 3 153.9	(b) 490.9	3 644.8

(a) For 1988-89, running costs include expenditure of the type shown as special appropriations for 1987-88. (b) Includes paid inoperatives.

Note: Any differences between totals and sums of components are due to rounding.

By far the largest part of ABS program expenditure (74.6%) in 1987-88 was salaries. Increased revenue, mainly from sale of publications, provided a greater offset to expenditure than in previous years. The full year effect of enhanced cost recovery introduced during 1987-88 is expected to lead to a further increase in revenue in 1988-89. More details of expenditure and receipts are given in Appendix 3. An estimated distribution of expenditure across various ABS program components is shown in Appendix 4.

## ORGANISATION

Besides the Central Office in Canberra the ABS has an office located in the capital city of each State and the Northern Territory. In Western Australia, South Australia and Tasmania the Deputy Commonwealth Statistician administering the office is also the State Government Statistician.

The number and distribution of full-time operative staff by office over the last three years is shown in the following table.

DISTRIBUTION OF STAFF 1985-86, 1986-87 and 1987-88

Office	1985-86	1986-87	1987-88
Average operative staff level (a)			
Central Office (Canberra)	1 668	1 653	1 644
New South Wales Office	529	524	501
Victorian Office	428	436	419
Queensland Office	319	328	364
Western Australian Office	229	237	221
South Australian Office	217	226	220
Tasmanian Office	132	126	128
Northern Territory Office	36	38	42
<i>Sub-total</i>	<i>3 558</i>	<i>3 568</i>	<i>3 539</i>
1986 Population Census			
Data Transcription Centre (Sydney)	..	1 015	27
<i>Total</i>	<i>3 558</i>	<i>4 583</i>	<i>3 566</i>

(a) Comprises full-time staff and part-time staff at full-time equivalent. Excludes inoperative staff, eg staff on approved leave for periods of twelve weeks or longer. Paid inoperative staff accounted for 104 staff years in 1987-88.

Note: Any differences between totals and sums of components are due to rounding.

Details of staffing by sub-program and component are given in Appendix 5. The top structure and senior staff of the ABS are shown in Appendix 2.

## MANAGEMENT AND PLANNING

The diverse activities involved in providing official statistical services require a considerable management effort to marshal resources in an optimal fashion. The ABS is increasingly conscious of the impossibility of satisfying all demands, and also of the constraints of limits on public spending and the workload placed on respondents. Efforts to react positively and responsibly to increasing demands, while staying within these constraints, have led to continual reshaping of management practices.

The ABS utilises a formalised planning system which, in the context of the corporate plan, revolves around a three-year forward work program "rolled forward" by one year each year. The infrastructure for this planning system consists of a formalised set of ABS programs (numbering 36 in 1987-88) and ABS projects (101 in 1987-88) - which are the program components and sub-components in the program budgeting context. It is at these levels that work programs are developed and resources allocated for internal management purposes.

Within this framework, and guided by the objectives and strategies identified in the ABS corporate plan, a rolling three-year forward work program is developed. Each year, the relative priorities and competing resource requirements of all program elements are formally and extensively considered by senior management. Particular attention is given to:

- The extent to which particular statistical activities continue to be justified vis a vis other work for which a demand has been expressed by users.
- Total resources likely to be available to the Bureau within the three-year period.
- Total demands on the service areas which the proposed forward work program would entail.
- Productivity gains which have been achieved or which might be possible in the future.
- The likely impact on respondent load and on privacy issues.
- The development, for each program element, of a set of specific tasks, which are to be achieved in the medium term.
- The market potential and revenue implications of the various initiatives proposed.

Proposals from ABS component managers are considered by senior management and the forward work program and estimates which emerge are then examined by the Advisory Council, reconsidered in the light of its advice, and submitted to the Minister. Staff and financial estimates are forwarded to the Department of Finance at the appropriate stages.

The culmination of each year's planning cycle is a comprehensive document describing the ABS's proposed work program for the ensuing triennium and the associated deployment of resources proposed. This document is available for public scrutiny and comment.

The external resource environment is now characterised by fixed staff and financial budgets with variations, negotiated in advance, to allow for major cyclical variations

(such as conduct of the population census). Within the ABS, resources allocated for the first year of the forward work program become the basis for controlling and monitoring the use of resources in all divisions and offices of the Bureau. The allocations are reviewed periodically during the year to take account of experience and any changes in circumstances that have occurred or are foreseen.

Regular assessments are made to ascertain whether the goals set down in the work program are being achieved and heads of Central Office branches and of the State Offices report formally to senior management, on a rotation basis, on achievements against the agreed goals. In this way overall managerial effectiveness is monitored and senior staff both in Central Office and the State Offices have an opportunity to discuss problems with senior management of the ABS.

This management and planning system is further enhanced by periodic meetings of senior officers of the Bureau to consider general policy, statistical and administrative matters. One of the standing items on the agenda is the ABS work program, which is discussed in detail before presentation to the Advisory Council.

From time to time, inter-office conferences are held of representatives of subject matter or service units, or those engaged on particular projects. The benefits in communication across a geographically dispersed organisation are significant.

Overlaid on these management practices are some special arrangements to manage the Bureau's use of technology and to ensure the successful development of computing systems. A committee of division heads, chaired by the Deputy Australian Statistician, oversees the management of technology, including the introduction of new technology. In development of computing systems, a standard systems development methodology is followed and all work is undertaken by multi-discipline project teams under the direction of line managers, aided by management and technical review committees. Periodic reports are furnished to senior management.

## **5 STATISTICAL OPERATIONS SUB-PROGRAM**

### **OBJECTIVE**

*The objective of the statistical operations sub-program is to contribute to the statistical goals of the Australian Bureau of Statistics by:*

- *Maintaining a balanced, timely, relevant statistical service.*
- *Ensuring product quality.*
- *Extending and improving the statistical service.*
- *Promoting statistical standards, classifications and frameworks.*
- *Coordinating the statistical activities of other government agencies.*
- *Balancing benefits to users with public and private costs of collection.*
- *Being cost efficient and increasing productivity.*

### **DESCRIPTION**

The sub-program operates in response to the statistical needs of governments and the wider community, taking into account the public and private costs associated with collecting, processing and disseminating statistical information. At the broad level, the activities undertaken within the statistical operations sub-program include:

- The collection, processing, analysis and dissemination of statistics.
- The coordination of the statistical activities of other agencies (through coordination reviews, participation in national and State statistical committees and through the ABS's outposted statistical service).
- The provision of professional statistical support (through outposted officers and consultancy work).
- The development, maintenance and promotion of statistical standards, classifications and frameworks.

The work program of the statistical operations sub-program is determined after extensive consultation with governments, businesses and community groups and with the advice of ASAC. In determining the work program, account is taken of the needs of users, the benefits of statistics, the load on respondents and the costs

associated with the activities. Information about ABS activities in relation to particular groups in the community, such as women and migrants, is given in Appendix 10.

The statistical operations sub-program depends on the corporate services sub-program for personnel and resource management, executive management and some aspects of data processing facilities. Individual components within the sub-program have close links with a wide range of specific government programs which act as providers of data, users of statistical information and users of statistical coordination and consultancy services. Other agencies also co-operate with the statistical operations sub-program in providing a total statistical service.

## OUTPUTS OF THE SUB-PROGRAM

Printed publications are the traditional medium for release of official statistics. Once preliminary statistics have been published, more detailed data may be available to individual users on request, either immediately or when further processing of results has occurred.

In most fields, statistics more detailed than those included in publications are available and can be obtained by the public by approaching the ABS through its central information service. This service provides a contact point for general enquiries about the availability of statistics or dissemination services. It also provides a telephone recorded message service - "Dial-a-Statistic" - covering the most frequently sought information.

The ABS exploits all major avenues for the dissemination of statistics and also releases data on microfiche, in computer-readable media (magnetic tape, floppy disk and CD-ROM) and through on-line electronic access. This latter form of access includes the use of VIATEL, the national videotex service; the use of a time series data base called AUSSTATS on the CSIRONET public access computer network to provide an on-line data service which is updated daily; and the use of TELESTATS, through the Keylink "T" electronic mail system (a joint service of Telecom and OTC), to deliver previously requested information to subscribers' electronic mail boxes.

However, even with an array of measures such as these the ABS cannot in practice meet the needs of all users of statistics direct. Various information intermediaries therefore play an important role in disseminating statistics. These include all branches of the media and libraries (general and specialised), as well as, more recently, the introduction of regional data centres in libraries or universities to provide a service, albeit more limited, to clients outside the capital cities.

## **PERFORMANCE OF THE SUB-PROGRAM**

The ABS Annual Report for 1986-87 included a list of indicators in terms of which it was expected the performance of the sub-program would be shown in subsequent Annual Reports. Since that time, the ABS has further developed its approach to performance indicators. In particular it has evolved a framework within which to assess the usefulness of indicators. This framework recognises that, to be most useful, sub-program performance indicators should:

- Be related to the sub-program's objective.
- Cover the main dimensions on which performance can be assessed. These have been determined as being:
  - Output (the volume of ABS products or services).
  - Efficiency (the relationship between inputs and outputs).
  - Effectiveness (the extent to which outputs meet the objective).
  - Cost effectiveness (being effective for the least cost).
- Be simple, significant and relevant.

When the list of indicators shown in the 1986-87 Annual Report was reviewed in terms of these criteria, it was found to be inadequate. The following indicators are considered to be more useful:

- Dissemination of ABS outputs:
  - Number of ABS releases, classified by subject matter and frequency.
  - Details of other forms of dissemination.
- Resources expended on coordination and consultation services.
- Cost of the statistical operations sub-program.
- Revenue raised.
- Timeliness of the release of ABS statistics.
- Complaints about respondent load.

The performance of the sub-program is shown below in terms of these indicators.

### Dissemination of ABS outputs

#### ABS RELEASES (a) CLASSIFIED BY SUBJECT MATTER AND FREQUENCY

	<i>Annual</i>	<i>Quarterly</i>	<i>Monthly</i>	<i>Other</i>	<i>Total</i>
Number					
<i>NATIONAL ACCOUNTS, BALANCE OF PAYMENTS, FOREIGN INVESTMENT, FOREIGN TRADE AND PUBLIC AND PRIVATE FINANCE</i>					
1986-87	37	60	218	7	322
1987-88	40	63	173	3	279
<i>AGRICULTURE, MINING, MANUFACTURING, CONSTRUCTION, DISTRIBUTION, TRANSPORT, SERVICES INDUSTRIES, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY</i>					
1986-87	120	136	464	11	731
1987-88	96	145	451	11	703
<i>ESTIMATES OF POPULATION, POPULATION PROJECTIONS, POPULATION CENSUS, VITAL STATISTICS AND MIGRATION</i>					
1986-87	50	5	15	19	89
1987-88	47	9	12	50	118
<i>LABOUR FORCE, EMPLOYMENT CONDITIONS, PRICES AND HOUSEHOLD INCOME AND EXPENDITURE</i>					
1986-87	29	54	130	19	232
1987-88	23	48	117	16	204
<i>EDUCATION, HEALTH, WELFARE, LAW, ORDER AND PUBLIC SAFETY</i>					
1986-87	37	..	..	6	43
1987-88	36	..	..	12	48
<i>GENERAL</i>					
1986-87	30	18	132	10	190
1987-88	34	19	131	4	188
<i>TOTAL</i>					
1986-87 (b)	303	273	959	72	1 607
1987-88	276	284	884	96	1 540

(a) Includes catalogue numbered publications and releases on microfiche, magnetic tape and floppy disk. (b) Figures revised from those shown in the 1986-87 Annual Report.

The above figures reflect:

- Rationalisation of data dissemination strategies, resulting in, for instance, discontinuation of some monthly foreign trade publications, and a move to more sophisticated dissemination modes.
- Release of data from the 1986 census of population and housing.
- A reduction in the number of manufacturing publications resulting from cancellation of the 1985-86 manufacturing census.

## OTHER FORMS OF DISSEMINATION

	<i>1986-87</i>	<i>1987-88</i>
AUSSTATS (Registered customers at 30 June)	118	185
TELESTATS (Number of mail boxes at 30 June)	40	50
VIATEL (ABS frames accessed)	302 820	206 318
CD-ROM (Units sold)	..	198
Inquiries serviced (Number)	311 897	342 967
Dial-a-Statistic (Number of calls)	33 305	36 900

The above data indicate a significant increase in the use of forms of dissemination other than publications. The significant decrease in the number of VIATEL accesses is mainly attributable to increased charges for this service, and thus reflects a rationalisation of demand.

### Coordination and consultation services

#### STAFF YEARS EXPENDED ON OUTPOSTING AND CONSULTANCY

	<i>Outposting</i>		<i>Consultancy</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	<i>1986-87</i>	<i>1987-88</i>	<i>1986-87</i>	<i>1987-88</i>	<i>1986-87</i>	<i>1987-88</i>
Staff years						
Commonwealth Government	11.7	11.3	6.1	6.6	17.8	17.9
State Governments	12.0	10.0	10.0	6.0	22.0	16.0
Other	..	..	3.5	3.3	3.5	3.3
<i>Total</i>	<i>23.7</i>	<i>21.3</i>	<i>19.6</i>	<i>15.9</i>	<i>43.3</i>	<i>37.2</i>

This indicator reflects reduced requirements for outposting, particularly in one State, in 1987-88, and the cessation of a one-off consultancy exercise in another State in 1986-87.

## Cost of the statistical operations sub-program

### COST OF STATISTICAL OPERATIONS SUB-PROGRAM AT CURRENT AND CONSTANT (a) PRICES

	1986-87	1987-88
	\$'000	
<i>TOTAL COST</i>		
Current prices	132 246	95 041
Constant prices (a)	116 414	77 584
<i>EXCLUDING POPULATION CENSUS</i>		
Current prices	87 414	94 180
Constant prices (a)	76 949	76 882

(a) 1984-85 prices.

The above data indicate that, after excluding the effects on resources of the 1986 census of population and housing, sub-program expenditure in constant prices remained stable.

## Revenue raised

### REVENUE RAISED AT CURRENT AND CONSTANT (a) PRICES

	Current prices		Constant prices (a)	
	1986-87	1987-88	1986-87	1987-88
\$'000				
Publications	484	2 287	408	1 798
Magnetic tapes	23	356	19	280
Overseas trade statistics	171	248	144	195
Microfiche	12	128	10	101
Photocopies	45	81	38	64
Data base interrogation	(b)	60	(b)	47
Floppy disks	(b)	14	(b)	11
CD-ROM	..	29	..	23
Maps	3	25	3	20
Other	195	228	165	179
<i>Total</i>	933	3 456	787	2 718

(a) 1984-85 prices. (b) Not separately identified: included in "Other".

This table reflects the effect of increases in charges for ABS services introduced in January 1988. An increase in the range of dissemination media is also apparent.

## Timeliness of the release of ABS statistics

### TIME BETWEEN END OF REFERENCE PERIOD AND RELEASE OF DATA

	1986-87	1987-88
Average number of elapsed days		
<i>MAIN ECONOMIC INDICATOR STATISTICS</i>		
Monthly	46	42
Quarterly	79	74
<i>OTHER STATISTICS</i>		
Monthly	62	50
Quarterly	126	120
Annual	452	356

The data above show significant improvements in the timeliness of the release of ABS statistics. These improvements have been achieved through greater efficiency and the use of new technologies in publication preparation.

### Complaints about respondent load

#### WRITTEN REPLIES TO BUSINESS COMPLAINTS AND MINISTERIAL AND STATISTICIAN'S REPLIES ABOUT RESPONDENT LOAD

	1986-87	1987-88
Number		
Replies to business complaints	97	73
Ministerial replies	9	8
Statistician's replies	6	4

The above figures show a drop in the number of complaints received.

### REVIEW OF COMPONENTS

The remainder of this chapter reviews the activities and achievements of each component of this sub-program during 1987-88.

#### Information services

The information services component, together with the time series services sub-component of the time series component (see page 66), disseminate statistics produced by the ABS. The dissemination activities and achievements of both these program elements are reviewed here.

ABS statistics are disseminated in a variety of forms including printed publications; computer printout; microfiche; computer-readable media such as magnetic tapes, floppy disks and CD-ROM; and by means of on-line electronic access. In addition the ABS provides statistical inquiry services. As well, information intermediaries in various fields play an important role in the dissemination of ABS data.

Figures on various forms of dissemination of ABS statistics are shown in the performance indicators for the statistical operations sub-program (see pages 34 to 39). Some additional figures are included below.

#### *Cost recovery*

In order to provide a rationing mechanism for demands on ABS products and to recover more of the cost of disseminating its statistics, the ABS, from January 1988, introduced charging for all its statistical publications. Previously there were charges only for publications of 25 pages or more. It also introduced market-based pricing for other statistical services such as for provision of data on magnetic tape, floppy disk and microfiche; for on-line data services; and for other special data services. The *Census and Statistics Act 1905* was amended to clarify the power of the Australian Statistician to charge for the supply of information. To support this revenue earning activity a central marketing function was established.

Free copies of publications are still provided on request to public libraries, university faculty libraries, parliamentarians and the media.

#### *Publications*

Publications range in size from a few pages containing monthly or quarterly key indicator series to major volumes such as the Australian and State year books. All publications are listed and described in the annual *Catalogue of Publications* (ABS Catalogue No. 1101.0). The volume of publication activity is indicated in the following table.

PUBLICATIONS ISSUED, 1987-88 (a)

	<i>Annual</i>	<i>Quarterly</i>	<i>Monthly</i>	<i>Other</i>	<i>Total</i>
Number of titles					
Central Office (Canberra)	109	49	43	58	259
New South Wales Office	29	4	4	2	39
Victorian Office	25	4	6	7	42
Queensland Office	35	6	7	7	55
Western Australian Office	26	5	7	3	41
South Australian Office	18	4	3	7	32
Tasmanian Office	21	5	5	10	41
Northern Territory Office	5	3	1	2	11
<i>Total</i>	268	80	76	96	520

(a) Includes, in addition to printed publications, catalogue numbered releases on microfiche, magnetic tape and floppy disk.

Approximately 23 000 clients were on the ABS's mailing list in June 1988 to receive publications. Of these, 60% were in the business sector; 18% were in Commonwealth, State and local government; 7% were in educational institutions; and 8% were private citizens; leaving 7% in other categories. This compares with 38 000 clients on the mailing list prior to the introduction of extended pricing in January 1988.

There were significant improvements in the efficiency of publication preparation during 1987-88. Up until early 1987, copy for graphs was mainly produced manually. During 1987-88, the ABS moved to computer production of copy for graphs, thereby halving the set up time. Efficiency gains were also made by the use of laser printers to produce camera-ready copy for computer produced tables. This eliminated the need for re-typing of tables and manual typesetting by staff of the Australian Government Publishing Service in many cases.

During 1987-88, as part of a series of trials of electronic publishing techniques, the ABS increasingly employed these facilities for the preparation of publications. As a result of these trials the ABS will be acquiring electronic publishing systems for publication preparation, with further increases in efficiency expected.

The following table shows expenditure on printing of publications compared with revenue from the sale of publications.

EXPENDITURE ON PRINTING AND REVENUE FROM SALE OF PUBLICATIONS

	<i>1986-87</i>	<i>1987-88</i>
\$'000		
Expenditure on printing of publications	1 543	1 719
Revenue from sales of publications (a)	484	2 287

(a) Excludes receipts by the Australian Government Publishing Service from sales of ABS publications.

Australian and State year books were not published in 1987 for economic reasons but are being reintroduced in 1988. The Australian and New South Wales year books for 1988 are special bicentennial issues. *Year Book Australia 1988* (ABS Catalogue No. 1301.0) is a 1 000 page publication with a major special article "Australian Statisticians and the Development of Official Statistics" researched and written by Professor Colin Forster and Dr Cameron Hazlehurst from the Australian National University; it also contains 19 smaller special articles mainly of an historical nature. The *New South Wales Year Book, 1988* (ABS Catalogue No. 1300.1) marks the bicentennial occasion with 200 pages of photographs depicting the history of the State. Early indications of sales are very encouraging.

### *Central information service*

During 1987-88 the ABS's central information service received 70% of its inquiries by telephone, 27% by personal visit and 3% by mail. Of the total inquiries, 71% were relatively straightforward requiring, for example, the provision of a publication or a few readily available figures. The other 29% involved a more detailed response such as arranging for a special extraction of data, coordinating a response crossing a range of statistical fields, or arranging a subscription to ABS publications or other customised data services. The number of inquiries received by the service has been increasing steadily each year. Inquiries for results from the 1986 census of population and housing have contributed to larger increases in the last 2 years.

A telephone recorded message service - "Dial-a-Statistic" - is provided from the larger ABS offices. In the Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Perth and Adelaide offices the message covers a small number of the most frequently sought series, including the consumer price index (CPI). In Canberra the message features the CPI and provides information about forthcoming data release dates.

### *Dissemination through electronic media*

With advances in telecommunications and increasing community access to computing facilities, there has been a growing demand for statistics in forms amenable to access, storage, and manipulation by computer. Growing numbers of users require immediate access to newly-released statistics and the freedom to transfer and manipulate data from large databases on demand. The present services which make use of electronic media are reviewed briefly below.

#### *VIATEL*

The ABS provides summary statistics and service information on VIATEL. Through VIATEL, users have instant access to main statistics from the time of their release.

### *AUSSTATS on-line data service*

The AUSSTATS on-line data service comprises a time series database and supporting software, on the CSIRONET public access computer network, for storing, retrieving and manipulating time series data. The service has the following features:

- The database is updated daily at the time statistics are released. Series cover the full time span of available data (up to 30 years in some cases).
- Users may access the database through a permanent link to CSIRONET, by a dial-up connection using the telephone network, or via "gateways" from other Australian or international networks.
- Users may transfer data from AUSSTATS to their own computer systems.
- Charges depend on resources consumed in using the facility and have been set to cover CSIRONET charges and ABS costs related directly to the maintenance of the service. All users of the system are charged.

The database for the service currently comprises over 35 000 series, most of which are drawn from publications, although they cover a longer time span than the data in current publications. However, AUSSTATS has the potential to provide ready access to a far wider range of data than it is practicable to provide in hard-copy form. Work on progressively expanding the database content to 50 000 general interest series is continuing as resources permit. In addition, series which are of interest to specific customers can be provided on a full cost recovery basis.

In order to improve the service offered a review of a sample of AUSSTATS customers is being undertaken.

### *TELESTATS electronic mail service*

The TELESTATS service uses the Keylink "T" electronic mail system (a joint service of Telecom and OTC) to automatically deliver previously requested, tailored information to subscribers' electronic mail boxes. Currently, the information provided is drawn from the ABS's database of monthly foreign trade statistics. Subscribers may request, for example, monthly returns showing trade in a customer-specified range of commodities.

The TELESTATS service will be progressively extended to provide a more broadly-based statistical dissemination medium covering a range of subject fields. The service continues to be a valuable supplement to the VIATEL and AUSSTATS services.

### *Magnetic tape services*

In recent years a growing volume of data has been made available on magnetic tape. Currently the ABS has 19 standard tape services, not including data made available on tape on an ad hoc basis. The standard releases are described in Part B of the *Catalogue of Publications* (ABS Catalogue No. 1101.0). Each tape is accompanied by documentation containing the technical and other information needed to enable it to be used effectively.

### *Floppy disk services*

As already indicated, the facility to transfer data to personal computers has been incorporated in the AUSSTATS service. The ABS has also developed systems for providing certain data on floppy disk in formats which can be read by the majority of personal computer systems. Floppy disk services were first made available to the public during 1986-87 and now cover statistics from the labour force survey, the retail census, the population census, the Australian Municipal Information System, and quarterly time series statistics including a number of series from the national accounts.

### *CD-ROM services*

In February 1988, for the first time, the ABS released statistics on CD-ROM (ie on compact disk in read-only format). The release, known as CDATA 86, comprises an extensive range of 1981 and 1986 population census data on CD-ROM, together with documentation and software providing a complete system for manipulating, tabulating and mapping the data by microcomputer. It was developed and is being marketed by the ABS in contract with a private enterprise company, Space-Time Research Pty Ltd. This release is the first in the world by an official statistical agency of population census output on CD-ROM. The release is seen as most important, not only because of the revenue raising potential of the product, but because it enables detailed census data to be easily accessed by analysts with microcomputing facilities.

The feasibility of releasing other large databases on CD-ROM is currently under consideration.

### **National accounts**

The national accounts component produces various statistics forming the Australian system of national accounts which presents, in a systematic and comprehensive way, summaries of economic transactions that take place in the Australian economy and between Australia and the rest of the world. The usefulness of the accounts derives largely from the way in which data are brought together from virtually all available sources and presented as far as possible in a conceptually consistent way both for a given period and over time. The accounts are basically in accordance with the United Nations System of National Accounts.

To present a current picture of the national economy, summary national income and expenditure accounts in terms of both current and constant prices are published as soon as possible after the end of each quarter. However, much of the more reliable information needed for the accounts does not become available until long after the publication of preliminary figures. As a result, estimates for the most recent quarters are based on limited data and successive revisions are necessary as additional information becomes available.

A more detailed and more firmly based picture of the national economy is provided in various national accounts publications which contain statistics such as the annual national income and expenditure estimates, the input-output tables, and annual estimates of gross product by industry.

Activities and achievements during the year included:

- Publication, for the first time, of quarterly private final consumption expenditure estimates for each State and Territory in the December quarter 1987 edition of *Australian National Accounts: National Income and Expenditure* (ABS Catalogue No. 5206.0).
- Release of rebased constant price estimates (at average 1984-85 prices) of expenditure on gross domestic product and its major components in a special issue of ABS Catalogue No. 5206.0 for the March quarter 1988.

#### **International accounts**

The international accounts component produces statistics and related information on the balance of payments, international economic transactions and foreign financial assets and liabilities.

Activities and achievements during the year included:

- Introduction of a new quarterly publication, *International Transportation Services, Australia* (ABS Catalogue No. 5350.0). This publication provides statistics on earnings and expenditure associated with international transportation services measured in the balance of payments accounts.
- Completion of a feasibility study into the conduct of a survey of international trade in services. Development work on the new survey is in progress.
- Commencement of redevelopment of the systems used to collect, process and compile results from the surveys of international airline and shipping operations. (The airline part was completed.)

- Conduct of a survey of enterprises known to provide financial facilities to Australian residents who travel abroad. Improvements were made in the coverage and methodology of this survey, which will now be conducted annually rather than biennially as in the past. Results from the survey were published in the December quarter 1987 edition of *Balance of Payments, Australia* (ABS Catalogue No. 5302.0).
- Expansion of the range of exchange rate measures provided in balance of payments publications.
- Inclusion of special feature articles and comments of a more analytic nature in quarterly balance of payments publications.
- Significant improvements in the presentation and data content of the capital account and investment income items in balance of payments publications.
- Provision, for the first time, in the publication *International Consultancy Services, Australia, 1986-87* (ABS Catalogue No. 5339.0), of statistics on the activity concentration of Australian consultants providing services abroad and on the activity of the foreign recipient to which the consultancy service was directed.
- Introduction of a comprehensive international investment position statement in the annual publications *Foreign Investment, Australia, Preliminary* (ABS Catalogue No. 5304.0) and *Foreign Investment, Australia* (ABS Catalogue No. 5305.0).
- Introduction of estimates of foreign investment in corporate equities on a market valuation basis in ABS Catalogue Nos 5304.0 and 5305.0, and in the quarterly publication *Foreign Investment, Australia* (ABS Catalogue No. 5306.0). This achieved consistency with the valuation used in estimating other forms of foreign investment and enhanced the analytic usefulness of the data.
- Compilation of statistics in respect of the foreign investment activity of banks on the same basis as other foreign investment statistics.
- Provision of additional detail on the structure and composition of Australia's foreign debt and associated changes in debt levels in the quarterly and annual foreign investment publications.
- Publication of preliminary quarterly statistics on Australian investment abroad and Australia's gross and net foreign debt in the quarterly publication *Foreign Investment in Australia, Preliminary* (ABS Catalogue No. 5307.0).

- Improvement in the timeliness of foreign investment publications, including a reduction of 5 months in the publication lag associated with the annual publication *Foreign Investment, Australia* (ABS Catalogue No. 5305.0).
- Completion of a review of the survey of international trade credit. As a result, this survey will be merged with the foreign investment surveys and a number of data items previously collected will be discontinued.
- Completion of a feasibility study into the possible use of sampling in foreign investment collections. As a result, sampling will be introduced in respect of the 1987-88 annual collections.
- Completion of the redesign and rationalisation of foreign investment survey forms to reflect ABS form design standards, take account of changing user requirements, facilitate reporting and reduce respondent load.
- Publication of *Foreign Ownership and Control of Registered Financial Corporations, Australia, 1985-86* (ABS Catalogue No. 5334.0).

## Trade

The trade component provides detailed statistics on the composition of Australia's export and import trade, on shipping and air cargo movements and on interstate trade. The statistics are available in a range of publications, on microfiche and on magnetic tape, as well as through "special returns" which provide regular information on individual commodities either by post or by TELESTATS (through Keylink "T", an electronic mail service provided jointly by Telecom and OTC). The component also maintains the statistical classifications for use by importers and exporters in completing customs documentation.

Activities and achievements during the year included:

- Finalisation of work associated with the adoption in Australia of a new international convention, the Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System, which was introduced in January 1988 as the basis for the collection and presentation of detailed import and export statistics. This required a major review of the statistical classification employed in the Customs Tariff, and incorporation of the new classification into the foreign trade computer processing system. Training seminars were conducted to assist the importing and exporting community to supply data on the new basis.
- Continuation of liaison with the Australian Customs Service concerning the development of an electronic system for export administration, which is expected to lead to improvements in the accuracy, timeliness and efficiency with which export statistics are produced.

- Rationalisation of the collection of shipping statistics by the phased introduction of a new administrative by-product collection from port authorities to largely replace an existing collection from shipping companies and so achieve a significant reduction in the statistical reporting workload borne by them. Data are already being collected from some port authorities, and arrangements are being negotiated with others.
- Publication, for the first time, of estimates of gross weight for commodity items for imports in shipping statistics in *Shipping and Air Cargo Commodity Statistics, Australia* (ABS Catalogue No. 9206.0).
- Commencement of a study of foreign control of enterprises engaged in export activity.

### Prices

The prices component undertakes the compilation of the consumer price index and price indexes relating to imports and exports, inputs and outputs of manufacturing industry, and materials used in the building industry.

Activities and achievements during the year included:

- Production, in February 1988, of an updated version of the publication *The Australian Consumer Price Index - Concepts, Sources and Methods* (ABS Catalogue No. 6461.0). This issue includes explanations of the measurement of price movements for new expenditure classes (eg. mortgage interest charges) introduced following the most recent review of the consumer price index, and other changes resulting from that review.
- Commencement of a review – scheduled for completion in 1988 – of the country towns food prices collection (including an assessment of user needs).
- Commencement of the development of a computer system to be used in the compilation of the consumer price index. The system is planned to be in full operation by the end of 1990.
- Extension, to include Canberra, of both the price index of materials used in house building and the price index of materials used in building other than house building.
- Commencement of a review of the price index of articles produced by manufacturing industry. The review will involve establishment of up-to-date weights to reflect the relative importance of manufactured articles, re-assessment of user requirements and reconsideration of price samples. A revised index is expected to be available early in 1989.

- Commencement of work on a new price index of materials used in the black coal mining industry. This is scheduled for completion in the middle of 1988. It is envisaged that, depending on user needs and availability of resources, indexes will later be developed to cover other mining industries.
- Provision of more information, in publications relating to building, production and foreign trade price indexes, to identify and quantify items contributing to movements in aggregate indexes.
- Computerisation of the compilation of producer price indexes and foreign trade price indexes. The new system is expected to be fully operational by the end of 1988.

### **Financial institutions**

The financial institutions component provides statistics of the lending activity and financial structure of banks, building societies, credit unions, finance companies, cash management trusts and superannuation funds, and of capital raised by the non-financial corporate sector. Some of the data collections from which these statistics are derived are undertaken in co-operation with authorities such as the Reserve Bank of Australia and State registrars of building societies and credit unions.

Activities and achievements during the year included:

- Considerable progress towards the introduction of quarterly flow of funds statistics to complement the quarterly national accounts. The work to date has concentrated on the development or extension of collections to provide source data for the flow of funds accounts. These accounts will show net acquisition of financial assets and incurrence of liabilities by each sector of the economy, classified according to the financial instruments involved. It is planned to compile the accounts initially in respect of the March quarter 1989 and to publish them following compilation of accounts for at least one further quarter.
- Publication of the final results from the redesigned 1984-85 surveys of superannuation funds including, for the first time, statistics covering funds administered by life insurance offices in *Superannuation Funds, Australia* (ABS Catalogue No. 5649.0).
- Completion of a review of the functions performed by the ABS and the Reserve Bank in the collection, processing and publication of statistics collected under the *Financial Corporations Act 1974*. As a result of the review duplication of work has been reduced, resulting in significant savings to the ABS.
- Participation with the Reserve Bank and the Treasury in the review of the statistical provisions of the *Banking Act 1959* and the statistics collected under those provisions. The resulting new collection forms are to be introduced from

January 1989. Other proposed changes to the Act will make it possible to further reduce duplication of work between the ABS and the Reserve Bank.

### Public finance

The public finance component provides statistical information on revenue, outlay and financing transactions of Commonwealth, State, Territory and local governments and their trading enterprises. In addition to a range of annual publications, quarterly statistics are compiled for inclusion in the national accounts, and detailed financial statistics about individual local government authorities are provided on magnetic tape and microfiche.

Activities and achievements during the year included:

- Commencement of a review of the costs and benefits of continuing to compile and publish detailed financial statistics for individual local government authorities from the system of standardised local government finance statistics.
- Considerable progress towards the development of standardised statistics on public sector indebtedness. Following extensive liaison with the Commonwealth and State treasuries the main conceptual issues have been resolved and a collection of statistics of indebtedness at 30 June 1987 was commenced in June 1988.
- Upgrading the 1987-88 issue of the component's main publication, *Government Financial Estimates* (ABS Catalogue No. 5501.0), to include additional statistical analyses and commentary. Analyses are provided of government "own purpose" outlays and of the trading results of public enterprises. Explanations are given of the various measures of government financing, the treatment of sales of equity in government owned institutions, and the degree of reliability of the various estimates included in the publication.

### Agriculture

The agriculture component has as its aim the provision of a balanced range of commodity and financial statistics relating to agriculture. The main elements of this component involve the conduct of an annual integrated agricultural commodity census, a number of commodity surveys and an agricultural finance survey, and the production of a range of derived statistics including estimates of the value of agricultural commodities produced and the apparent consumption of foodstuffs and nutrients.

Activities and achievements during the year included:

- Conduct of the 1986-87 agricultural census with its scope redefined to include only establishments with an estimated annual value of agricultural operations

greater than \$20 000 (previously \$2 500). Collection of basic data from small agricultural establishments outside the scope of the census is now carried out by an annual agricultural activity collection. The main purpose of this collection is to ensure the completeness of the census and to provide indicative statistics on agricultural activities by the small establishments.

- Reintroduction of the agricultural finance survey on an annual basis from the reference year 1986-87. It was last conducted for 1980-81. In the conduct of the 1986-87 survey, strategies have been followed to eliminate duplication between the survey and farm surveys undertaken by the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics (ABARE). This has involved close co-operation between the ABS and the ABARE to eliminate overlap of their respective samples and, where practicable, to share data.

### **Mining**

The mining component conducts, with the co-operation and assistance of State government mines departments, an annual census of the mining industry. The census provides data on the structure and operations of the industry, comparable with those available in respect of other sectors included in the rotating economic census program. Quarterly collections of mineral and petroleum exploration are also conducted.

Activities and achievements during the year included:

- Expansion, in order to overcome a problem of increasing undercoverage, of the quarterly mineral exploration collection from a partial collection to a complete enumeration, commencing with statistics for the September quarter 1987.
- Transfer of processing of the quarterly mineral and petroleum exploration collections from a clerical to a computer based system.
- Continuation of a comprehensive review of the mining component with a view to achieving a realistic balance between users' needs, respondent load and available resources. It is expected that the review will be completed by the end of 1988.

### **Energy**

The energy component produces statistics on energy and its usage in both the household and industrial sectors.

Activities and achievements during the year included:

- Publication of annual electricity and gas consumption data from the 1985-86 household energy survey in *National Energy Survey: Household Energy Consumption* (ABS Catalogue No. 8213.0).

- Conduct of a survey of electricity and fuels in respect of 1986-87. This survey collected information on the amount of electricity and selected fuels used by a broad cross-section of Australian industries, and the purposes for which they were used. Results from the survey will be published in 1988-89.

## Manufacturing

The manufacturing component includes regular censuses of manufacturing and electricity and gas production and distribution, and monthly and quarterly surveys of manufacturing production.

Activities and achievements during the year included:

- The introduction of a sample component in the 1986-87 manufacturing census which, while restricting sampling error to low levels, resulted in greatly reduced reporting workloads for a majority of manufacturers. Further significant reductions in respondent load were achieved by the introduction of simplified reporting formats for all manufacturers.
- Development of a new forward program of manufacturing industry statistics for the 3 year period 1988-89 to 1990-91. "Full scale" manufacturing censuses will no longer be conducted annually, but the program will continue to largely satisfy the major user requirements currently being met and also meet most of the high priority unmet user needs. In achieving this there will be an overall reduction in total reporting load imposed on manufacturers and significant ABS resource savings. The main features of the program are:
  - "Full-scale" censuses to be conducted triennially – the first to be conducted in respect of the reference year 1989-90. For intervening years, "restricted content" census collections will be conducted to obtain details of employment, turnover and wages and salaries paid.
  - The sample size for the manufacturing sector in existing quarterly business surveys to be increased to provide reliable and more detailed quarterly and annual estimates of key items (i.e. employment, wages and salaries, manufacturers' sales, stocks, and capital expenditure).
  - More detailed national and State quarterly production indexes to be introduced. The significant increase in the scope of the monthly and quarterly production collections, which is a necessary prerequisite to compiling the indexes, will also be of direct benefit to users.
  - A facility to be provided to enable the ABS to conduct, on an ad hoc basis, small-scale industry and issue-specific surveys involving manufacturers and/or other businesses in order to produce statistics which are timely and relevant to contemporary industry issues.

- Completion of a study into the feasibility of compiling quarterly production indexes for more detailed categories at the national level, and at a State level. The study concluded that reliable quarterly production indexes could be constructed and action is now being taken to develop such indexes.
- Inclusion of trend figures and trend charts for the 30 items in *Production Statistics, Australia, Preliminary* (ABS Catalogue No. 8301.0).
- Reduction, from 11 to 8 weeks on average, in the time taken to release each of the 7 monthly and 1 quarterly manufacturing production publications, *Production Bulletin No. 1* to *No. 8* (ABS Catalogue Nos 8357.0 to 8364.0). This was achieved by the introduction of computer based processing of the collections.

### Distribution and services industries

The distribution and services industries component includes monthly surveys of retail trading and periodic censuses or surveys of retail, wholesale and services industries.

Activities and achievements during the year included:

- Release of preliminary results from the 1985–86 retail census in *Retail Industry: Summary of Operations, Australia, 1985–86, Preliminary* (ABS Catalogue No. 8613.0).
- Release, for each State, of small area statistics from the 1985–86 retail census, in hard copy publications, *Retail Industry: Small Area Statistics, 1985–86* (ABS Catalogue Nos 8623.1 to 8623.6), and in computer readable form, *Retail Industry, Small Area Statistics, 1985–86 – Data on Floppy Disk: Technical Details and Explanatory Notes* (ABS Catalogue Nos 8641.1 to 8641.6).
- Conduct of a survey of major tourism and personal services industries in respect of 1986–87. Some of the industries had been surveyed previously (in 1979–80), while other industries – motor vehicle hire, travel agents, and photographic services – were surveyed for the first time as part of an ABS integrated program of industry statistics. The results of the survey will be provided in a series of publications during 1988–89.
- Development of questionnaires and operating procedures for a survey of major business and professional services industries in respect of 1987–88. The survey has been developed in accordance with the needs and priorities of relevant Commonwealth and State agencies and in consultation with private sector industry associations. Industries to be covered by the survey include real estate agents; architectural, surveying, engineering and scientific services; legal and

accounting services; data processing; advertising services; market and business consultancy services; typing and mailing services; credit reporting, cleaning, security services etc. The survey will be conducted during 1988-89, with results to be provided in a series of publications during 1989-90.

- A sizeable reduction in the extent of surveying of new retail businesses each quarter, following a cost/benefit assessment of collection activities associated with the compilation of monthly retail trade statistics.
- Reduction by 2 days on average in the time taken to produce the monthly publication *Retail Sales of Goods (Excluding Motor Vehicles, Parts, Petrol, etc.), Australia* (ABS Catalogue No. 8501.0) by adopting computer produced camera ready output for tables.

### Construction

The construction component compiles monthly statistics of building approvals and dwelling commencements, as reported by local government and other approving authorities; conducts quarterly surveys of building activity and engineering construction activity; and conducts a periodic survey to provide details of the structure, inputs and outputs of the construction industry.

Activities and achievements during the year included:

- Introduction of computer generated camera ready copy facilities in the production of all national publications, resulting in enhancement of the publications and their more efficient production and more timely release. For instance, the time taken to produce the monthly publication *Building Approvals, Australia* (ABS Catalogue No. 8731.0) has been reduced by 4 days on average. This has been achieved at the same time as introduction of quarterly constant price data into the publication.
- Review of the scope of the building approvals collection to identify possibilities for reduction of respondent load and improvement in processing efficiency.
- Commencement of development of systems for building approvals data capture on electronic media to reduce respondent load and improve timeliness.
- Provision of advice on, and processing of, a survey by the Department of Industry, Technology and Commerce concerning foreign participation in construction activities (including construction project feasibility studies, architectural work, etc.).
- Establishment of a housing statistics user advisory group.

- Commencement of work on preparation of a directory of housing related statistics.

### Transport and tourism

The transport and tourism component consists of the transport sub-component and the tourism sub-component.

#### *Transport*

The transport sub-component covers the collection and dissemination of monthly statistics on new motor vehicle registrations and road traffic accidents involving fatalities; quarterly statistics on road traffic accidents and interstate road freight movements; annual statistics on interstate freight movements; a triennial survey of motor vehicle use and an associated motor vehicle census; and a periodic survey of the transport industry.

Activities and achievements by this sub-component during the year included:

- Completion of a review of the needs and priorities of users of statistics from the survey of motor vehicle use and the transport industry survey, which resulted in decisions to continue with the triennial frequency of the former in 1988, but to defer the latter (tentatively planned for 1989-90) to the mid 1990s.
- Development of the 1988 survey of motor vehicle use and associated motor vehicle census.
- Development and conduct of the first phase, in 1988, of the odometer survey designed to provide a measure of the reliability of the recall methodology for distance travelled employed in the survey of motor vehicle use.

#### *Tourism*

The tourism sub-component includes a quarterly survey of tourist accommodation activity and other periodic surveys.

Activities and achievements by this sub-component during the year included:

- Publication, commencing with the September quarter 1987, of statistics on holiday flats, units and houses, in *Tourist Accommodation, Australia* (ABS Catalogue No. 8635.0). The production of these additional statistics from the quarterly survey of tourist accommodation follows a recommendation contained in a 1985 report by the (then) Department of Sport, Recreation and Tourism on the needs of users of tourism statistics in both the public and private sectors.

- Commencement of a review of the content and presentation of the Australian and State publications of statistics from the quarterly survey of tourist accommodation.
- Establishment of close working relations and coordination on tourism statistical matters with the newly created Bureau of Tourism Research.

### **Business surveys**

The business surveys component includes quarterly surveys of actual and expected new capital expenditure by private sector businesses, stocks, actual and expected manufacturers' sales and company profits. These provide some of the principal quarterly indicators of economic activity in Australia and are prime data sources for the quarterly national accounts. The component is also responsible for the production of enterprise statistics from ABS annual and periodic economic collections and for the conduct of ad hoc surveys to measure economic transactions not covered elsewhere.

Activities and achievements during the year included:

- Publication of a new capital expenditure series on an "effective ownership" basis (whereby the value of new assets acquired by businesses under finance lease arrangements is included in the capital expenditure of the users of the assets) rather than the "legal ownership" basis previously used (whereby the value was included in the capital expenditure of the lessors) in the quarterly publications *Private New Capital Expenditure, Australia, Preliminary* (ABS Catalogue No. 5625.0) and *Private New Capital Expenditure, Australia* (ABS Catalogue No. 5626.0).
- Publication of an improved industry breakdown of the capital expenditure series following arrangements to have large businesses which operate in more than one industry report data for each of their industries (ABS Catalogue Nos 5625.0 and 5626.0).
- Enhancement of the presentation of the quarterly publication *State Estimates of Private New Capital Expenditure* (ABS Catalogue No. 5646.0) including introduction of seasonally adjusted estimates.
- Collection of data on expected sales by manufacturers for a longer time period than previously collected and inclusion of statistics in the quarterly publication *Stocks and Manufacturers Sales, Australia* (ABS Catalogue No. 5629.0).
- Collection of data on wholesalers' sales to allow the derivation of better estimates of quarterly gross product.

- Collection of additional stocks data to enable better estimates to be made of the stock valuation adjustment for national accounts purposes.
- Inclusion of additional seasonally adjusted series in the quarterly publication *Company Profits, Australia* (ABS Catalogue No. 5651.0).
- Commencement of a review of the survey of company profits.
- Preparation for a survey of the commodity composition of new capital expenditure.
- Preparation for a survey of interest, rent, royalties and dividends.
- Completion of the implementation of a new processing system for the quarterly economic indicator surveys conducted by the component.

### **Science and technology**

The science and technology component is responsible for the compilation and dissemination of statistics on research and experimental development (R&D) and on the use of advanced technologies. The component also has a monitoring and coordinating role in the areas of science and technology statistics.

Activities and achievements during the year included:

- Release of preliminary results from the 1986-87 R&D survey in the publications *Research and Experimental Development, Business Enterprises, Australia, 1986-87, Preliminary* (ABS Catalogue No. 8105.0), *Research and Experimental Development, General Government and Private Non-profit Organisations, Australia, 1986-87, Preliminary* (ABS Catalogue No. 8108.0) and *Research and Experimental Development, Higher Education Organisations, Australia, 1986-87, Preliminary* (ABS Catalogue No. 8115.0). The all-sector aggregates which result from the R&D survey form the only comprehensive data on Australia's R&D effort.
- Preparations for conduct of the "inter-year estimates" R&D survey in respect of 1987-88. (The next full R&D survey will be conducted in respect of 1988-89.)
- Preparations for conduct of the first ABS survey on the usage of advanced technologies. The survey will measure the use of advanced manufacturing technologies as at 30 June 1988. For international comparability of data, it is based on similar surveys in the United States and Canada.
- Continued contribution to the development of information, communication and computer statistics within the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). These statistics are being developed to provide

measures of the impact, both economic and social, of the rapid advances in technology, particularly in the areas of telecommunications and micro-electronics, which are taking place in OECD member countries.

### Integration, classification and development

The integration, classification and development component provides a service to other components of the statistical operations sub-program by establishing and maintaining standard concepts and definitions for structural data items and units mainly for economic statistics, and by providing training, coordination and research services in relation to the development and conduct of the ABS's integrated economic censuses and surveys. In addition, the component is responsible for the development and maintenance of statistical classifications used by the ABS and other government agencies.

Activities and achievements during the year included:

- Continued maintenance and further development of concepts, definitions and procedures for the delineation and classification of statistical units to align with current business accounting practices.
- Publication of the first edition of the *Standard Institutional Sector Classification of Australia* (ABS Catalogue No. 1218.0).
- Continued review of the 1983 edition of the *Australian Standard Industrial Classification* (ASIC) (ABS Catalogue Nos 1201.0 and 1202.0) with the objective of implementing a revised, updated ASIC in 1990.
- Publication of the 1988 edition of the *Australian Transport Freight Commodity Classification and Australian Pack Classification* (ABS Catalogue No. 1210.0), operative from 1 January 1988. The Australian Transport Freight Commodity Classification has been rebased on the Standard International Trade Classification (SITC), Revision 3, which, in turn, is closely aligned with the Harmonised Commodity Description and Coding System, on which the Australian Customs Tariff and the Australian import and export recording systems are based from 1 January 1988. The 1988 edition incorporates an improved index and will be made available in computer readable form.
- Rebasing the *Australian Standard Commodity Classification* (ASCC) (ABS Catalogue Nos 1207.0 and 1208.0) on the SITC, Revision 3. During 1987-88, this involved preparation of a completely revised (ie, SITC Rev. 3 based) set of proposed manufacturing production commodity items for further assessment and testing prior to their introduction. (The ASCC enables comparable commodity statistics of imports, exports and domestic production to be compiled, and serves as a framework for improving comparability between commodity items in ABS statistical series.)

- Continued development of the ASCC to extend its coverage to commodities originating in construction and services industries.
- Publication of the fourth and fifth editions of the *Australian Standard Geographical Classification* (ASGC) (ABS Catalogue No. 1216.0).
- Review of ABS statistical geography with special emphasis on improving the spatial unit criteria in the ASGC.
- Continued participation in the review by the United Nations Statistical Office of the International Standard Industrial Classification and related classifications.

#### Economic censuses system

The economic censuses system component provides a variety of services to other components of the statistical operations sub-program involved in conducting the ABS's integrated economic censuses and surveys. These services include the extraction of economic census and survey populations from the ABS register of businesses; the dispatch and collection of forms; and the analysis, design, development and maintenance of the computer processing system for these collections. The component also assists other components in specifying their requirements for the services.

Activities and achievements during the year included:

- Dispatch, collection and processing of the forms for the mining, manufacturing and services industries collections, and the economy-wide survey of energy and fuels, in respect of 1986-87. For the manufacturing collection, "tailored" forms were produced using laser printing technology. This is the first time this technology has been used by the ABS to produce tailored forms. Considerable improvement was achieved in the presentation of the forms.
- Development of the computer processing system for the 1986-87 mining, manufacturing and services industries collections.
- Investigations into new technologies to improve efficiency in processing the integrated economic censuses and surveys, specifically in the area of relational database management systems.
- Completion of pilot tests of the use, on contract, of an external mail handling service for despatch of collection forms. Investigations were commenced on some further specific aspects of the ABS's requirements for mail handling.

## **Population census**

The population census component develops and conducts censuses of population and housing. A population census is required, by legislation, to be conducted every five years. The results are used to revise population estimates and to provide detailed statistics on the population and its housing.

Activities and achievements during the year included:

- Continuation of release of results from the eleventh national census of population and housing, which was conducted on 30 June 1986. Significant features of the results released are as follows:
  - Results were released for a wide range of geographic areas, in various traditional forms: magnetic tape; microfiche; printed reports; and statistical publications.
  - For the first time, an extensive range of census statistics was released on CD-ROM (ie data stored on compact disk in read-only format) along with software for manipulating and mapping the statistics. The package is known as CDATA 86. Census statistics for specified areas will also be provided on floppy disk for use on microcomputers. These new methods of releasing data will increase user access to census statistics.
  - The 1986 census data are supported by an extensive array of information papers and maps; of particular note are the collection district outline maps available in colour on microfiche and the comprehensive census dictionary which provides definitions of concepts and terminology used in the census.
  - Most census output released by June 1988 was based on the actual location of the population on census night. However, a greater range of statistics are being released later in 1988 on the basis of the place of usual residence of the population.
- Commencement of work on producing a range of analytic publications reporting on selected topics and the quality of the data from the 1986 census.
- Commencement of planning for a census in 1991, following approval from the Government to proceed with planning for at least a minimum population census in that year. A minimum census would collect only information on age, sex and usual residence for the purpose of revising population estimates. In addition, the Government directed that consultation with users about the content of a 1991 census should proceed on the basis of the cost of the census being a good deal less than the cost of the 1986 census.

- Release of an information paper *1991 Census of Population and Housing: Preliminary ABS Views on Content and Procedures* (ABS Catalogue No. 2171.0). In the past, in preparation for the population census, the ABS has, as a first step in consultation, sought submissions from users of statistics from the census. However, in preparation for the 1991 census, the ABS, as the first step in the consultation process, issued the information paper, which is based on knowledge obtained from the topic submission schemes for the last two censuses and on known uses of census data. The paper outlines two broad approaches which could be followed to reduce the cost of the 1991 census, and sets out preliminary ABS views on the content of the 1991 census for each approach. Associated procedures for conducting the census are also described. Advertisements were placed in major newspapers inviting responses from users of census data and the public. Five hundred and sixty responses were received and assessed before ABS recommendations on the 1991 census were prepared for consideration by the Australian Statistics Advisory Council. A submission seeking a decision on the final content of the census will be put to the Government early in 1988-89.
- Conduct of tests which showed that respondent-marked forms are suitable for processing using optical mark recognition technology. A decision was taken to use this approach in the 1991 census, in an effort to reduce costs and risks to staff health from repetitive keying of data as used in the 1986 census.
- Investigation into the more extensive use of computer assisted techniques to code questions requiring a written-in descriptive response. These techniques have the potential to reduce costs as well as improve the quality of data compared with that from previous processing methods.

## Demography

The demography component produces regular statistics on births, deaths, marriages, divorces, overseas arrivals and departures, and internal migration. Also, estimates are produced of the age, sex, birthplace, marital status and geographical distribution of the population. Forward projections of the population according to specified demographic assumptions are published on a regular basis.

Activities and achievements during the year included:

- Completion of development of computer systems which allow most demography bulletins to be produced by the use of computer generated camera-ready tables and graphs. This has reduced the need for type-setting and has contributed to improvement in the appearance of the publications and in their timeliness.
- An increase in the release of statistics by electronic means, such as VIATEL, AUSSTATS, floppy disks and computer tapes, in order to better satisfy user demand.

- Revision of population estimates for the period 1981-1986 in the light of results of the 1986 census of population and housing.
- A review of user requirements for statistics from the internal migration survey, which resulted in a decision to conduct the survey less frequently and to undertake an investigation into means of improving the accuracy of estimates.
- Completion of a new set of population projections based on results of the 1986 population census to be published in *Projections of the Populations of Australia, States and Territories* (ABS Catalogue No. 3222.0).
- Publication of results of the 1986 family formation survey in *Family Formation Survey, Australia, September 1986* (ABS Catalogue No. 3223.0).
- Completion of development of a computer system to receive divorces data from the Family Court on computer tape.
- Implementation of a new computer processing system, designed to reduce the use of computing resources, for demographic statistics.

## Labour

The labour component provides statistical information on the composition and characteristics of the labour force, the operations of the labour market and conditions of employment.

Labour force statistics are collected in a monthly population survey of a sample of households across Australia. The survey is conducted by the population surveys component (see page 69). It provides timely estimates of employment and unemployment, together with basic demographic data to enable various characteristics of the employed and unemployed to be analysed. In addition, in most months of the year, supplementary surveys are run in conjunction with the population survey to collect more detailed data on specific issues. The supplementary surveys provide data required for more detailed analysis of the activities and behaviour of various population groups.

Topics covered by supplementary surveys in 1987-88 included persons not in the labour force; discouraged job-seekers; weekly earnings of employees and non-wage benefits received; labour mobility; labour force experience; educational attainment; apprentices; attendance at educational institutions; transition from education to work; multiple jobholders; persons who have left the labour force in the last twelve months; and underemployed persons.

The labour component operates an integrated system of employer surveys which provides quarterly data on employed wage and salary earners; average weekly earnings; and job vacancies and overtime; as well as annual data on employers'

labour costs and the distribution and composition of employee earnings and hours. The component produces monthly statistics on industrial disputes and annual statistics on trade union membership. Indexes of award rates of pay are compiled monthly.

Activities and achievements during the year included:

- Publication of monthly preliminary data on labour force status, classified by attendance at educational institutions, for persons aged 15 to 19 years in *The Labour Force, Australia, Preliminary* (ABS Catalogue No. 6202.0).
- Publication of an information paper *Labour Force Survey - Measuring Teenage Unemployment* (ABS Catalogue No. 6270.0).
- Conduct of an enhanced survey of major labour costs in respect of 1986-87, covering both the private and public sectors. The survey provided valuable data about employers' "on-costs" of superannuation, workers' compensation, payroll tax and fringe benefits tax. It is expected that the results from this survey will be published in 1988-89.
- Conduct of the first triennial survey of wage costs, in respect of 1986-87. It provided data which will be used to compile estimates of wages and salaries costs per hour worked and costs per hour paid but not worked (e.g. time on sick leave and holiday leave). Results are expected to be published in 1988-89.
- Completion of rebasing of the monthly indexes of award rates of pay. Weights for the indexes are now based on employee data from a 1985 survey, and replace indexes whose weights were based on 1976 employee distribution data. Additional indexes have been compiled, with more emphasis on award rate indexes classified by occupation.
- Commencement of a study of the feasibility of conducting a survey of employer expenditure on training and training activities.
- Development of surveys of worker training and career paths of tradespersons.
- A significant review of the sample design of the survey of employment and earnings, resulting in the private sector sample being reduced by about 25%.

### Social

The social component produces statistics relating to income, expenditure, welfare, housing, health, education, crime, justice and other social matters. Within the component there are three main work streams: the design and development of social surveys and the processing, dissemination and analysis of survey data; the compilation and analysis of data relating to areas of social concern and specific

social groups; and the promotion of integrated social statistics through the development and dissemination of standard statistical concepts, definitions and classifications.

Social surveys are undertaken at both the national and State levels. Publications containing results from the national surveys present information and analysis principally at the national level, but some State details are also included. However, additional State publications containing detailed State data from the national surveys are also available. Publications relating to State-specific surveys provide information and analysis at the State level and often for geographical areas below State level. Computer tapes containing unidentifiable unit record data are available for the major surveys as a standard service. The records are normally at the level of persons, households and families.

Activities and achievements during the year included:

- Release of data from the following surveys:

Income distribution (national, 1986).  
Child care (national, 1987).  
Voluntary and unpaid work (New South Wales, 1986).  
Time use (pilot survey) (New South Wales, 1987).  
Use of domiciliary support services (Victoria, 1986).  
Crime and crime prevention (Victoria, 1987).  
Use of legal services (Queensland, 1986).  
Crime prevention attitudes (Queensland, 1987).  
Smoking and asthma (South Australia, 1987).  
Library usage (Tasmania, 1987).  
Alcohol and tobacco consumption (Northern Territory, 1986).

- Significant improvements in the timeliness of results from the income distribution survey, particularly in the production of the unit record tape. For the 1986 survey the tape was available 14 months after data collection, compared with 27 months for the 1982 survey.
- Commencement, in November 1987, of a wide ranging review of the ways in which social data are disseminated to users. The aim is to improve the accessibility of data to users by taking particular advantage of advances in electronic data storage and dissemination using microcomputers. Of special interest in this regard is the potential for use of CD-ROM technology to disseminate survey data.
- Development work on the following surveys:

Disability and ageing (national), conducted in the first quarter of 1988.

- Housing (national), conducted in the first quarter of 1988.
  - Health (national), scheduled to be conducted in 1989-90.
  - Household expenditure (national), scheduled to be conducted in 1988-89.
  - Health insurance (national).
  - Living conditions (Victoria).
  - Volunteer work (South Australia).
  - Post secondary education (NT).
- 
- Continued release of publications, on a regular basis, on social topics such as courts, hospital morbidity, industrial accidents and schools.
  - Preparation of three national social reports, on crime and justice; children; and overseas born Australians. They will be published in 1988-89.
  - Commencement of preparation of the fifth edition of the publication *Social Indicators* (ABS Catalogue No. 4101.0).
  - Chairing of a committee which reports to the Police Ministers Council on ways to improve national crime statistics.
  - Continuation of work on classifications and standards, concentrating on reviews of several basic variables used in the population census and ABS social surveys (eg marital status, family, birthplace and educational qualifications), and on the *Australian Standard Classification of Occupations* (ABS Catalogue No. 1222.0) coding system for use in the vital statistics collections.
  - Establishment of a program of major reviews to examine the demand for and the supply of statistics within several broad areas of social concern such as health; education and training; crime and justice; and social security and welfare. It is expected that these reviews will determine the future directions of the ABS in social statistics in terms of its own work program and its coordination activities with other agencies.

### Time series

The time series component consists of three sub-components: econometric analysis; time series analysis; and time series services.

#### *Econometric analysis*

The econometric analysis sub-component undertakes maintenance and development work on the national income forecasting (NIF) and the Australian medium term policy simulation (AMPS) econometric models of the Australian economy and their associated databases.

Activities and achievements by this sub-component during the year included:

- Technical input to the work of the Government's Joint Economic Forecasting Group.
- Use of econometric methods and related statistical techniques to help improve ABS statistical output, particularly the national accounts.
- Development of a methodology for producing labour force projections for the total population and for specific age.sex groups. It is proposed that an occasional paper will be published in 1988-89 on this topic.
- Advice to external users about the availability and suitability of data for econometric and related statistical analysis and the use of analytical techniques.

#### *Time series analysis*

The time series analysis sub-component is responsible for the maintenance and development of statistically based time series analysis facilities, especially those for the estimation of seasonality, trend and irregular factors. The service covers publication and internal user requirements of the ABS and, by arrangement, requirements of other Commonwealth and State departments and authorities.

Activities and achievements by this sub-component during the year included:

- Development of a pilot expert system for seasonal re-analysis of monthly time series.
- Development of improved trend estimation procedures.
- Implementation of procedures for estimating changing trading/working day factors.
- Advice to users concerning the interpretation of time series.

#### *Time series services*

The time series services sub-component, whose main activities are dissemination of time series statistics on microfiche, in computer-readable media and through on-line electronic access, is covered in the review of the information services component on pages 39 to 44.

## **Mathematical statistics**

The mathematical statistics component provides a service in sampling and other mathematical statistics techniques within the ABS and, on a consultative basis, to other Commonwealth and State agencies. Limited assistance is also provided to other statistical agencies in the Asia and Pacific region. The component also encompasses research in statistical theory and methods and techniques for conducting sample surveys.

Examples of the type of service provided to other agencies during 1987-88 are:

- Australian Meat and Livestock Corporation – assistance with the design of schemes for the inspection of export beef to guard against residues of pesticides.
- Department of Primary Industries and Energy – assistance with the statistical analysis of chemical tests of samples of Bass Strait petroleum.
- Department of Industrial Relations – assistance with a survey to assess the level of over-award payments in the clothing trades.
- Attorney-General's Department – assistance in assessing the appropriateness of a proposed royalty on blank recording tapes.
- ACT Health Authority – assistance with a health survey conducted in the ACT.
- Department of Community Services and Health – assistance with a proposed survey of community care needs for AIDS sufferers.
- South Pacific Commission – assistance with a course on household surveys, for statisticians from the Pacific region.
- General Statistical Office of Vietnam – assistance in the use of sampling in that country's population census.

During the past year investigations have been carried out into the use of telephones for interviewing in the monthly population survey and into the use of computers to assist when interviewing by telephone. Possible techniques are being tested and, if they prove to be successful, they will be introduced in survey operations in 1989-90. They are expected to result in a reduction in interviewing costs.

## **Statistical services and user liaison**

The statistical services and user liaison (SSUL) component provides a flexible and responsive service through the ABS State and Northern Territory Offices to meet the priority statistical needs of the State and Northern Territory governments additional

to the needs satisfied by the established, ongoing statistical output of the ABS. The work undertaken by the SSUL component often takes the form of statistical consultation services (eg survey questionnaire design, and advice on survey sample construction) or the provision of an ABS officer outposted within a State government department or authority to carry out specific short-term statistical assignments. Similar services are also provided, in some instances, to other organisations such as local government bodies and other non profit bodies.

Through the SSUL component, the ABS participates in the work of bodies established by State governments to coordinate the statistical activities and requirements of their departments and agencies. These bodies provide a priority-setting mechanism and a means of formulating a uniform State view on statistical requirements and other issues, and constitute a source of valuable advice and feedback on ABS work program proposals and activities in general. The ABS also maintains contact with State government departments and authorities in order to be aware of their statistical activities and their use of information from existing statistical collections. The Bureau encourages the adoption of uniform standards and practices in statistical activities across government agencies.

In some offices the SSUL component undertakes special analyses of ABS data and produces publications containing results, typically using data from ABS household-based surveys and presenting results for sub-State regions. The component is also closely involved in the development and conduct of the annual State-specific ABS household surveys which provide important data for State governments on topics of particular concern, which vary from State to State (see, for instance, pages 64 and 65 regarding State-specific surveys relating to social matters). Other statistical support services associated with State-specific needs are also provided by the SSUL component.

The SSUL component in some offices coordinates and undertakes visits to major users of statistics, and conducts seminars for a broad range of users in both the public and private sectors and in tertiary institutions.

Examples of activities and achievements during the year include:

- For the New South Wales Department of Energy – Modelling of energy demand in New South Wales manufacturing industry.
- For the New South Wales Department of Finance – Provision of an outposted ABS officer to investigate classification requirements involved in the Department's development of a computerised information system, and to assist with industry classification of payroll tax data as part of the initial stage of implementation of the system.
- For the Victorian Department of the Premier and Cabinet – Provision of an outposted ABS officer to assist with the compilation of a register of data collections by State agencies.

- For the Victorian Department of Management and Budget – Provision of an outposted ABS officer to prepare a profile of the statistical activities of the Department, including statements of data flows and requirements.
- For the Queensland Department of Transport – Provision of a sample design for examining drink-driving convictions.
- For the Western Australian Health Department – Costing, sample selection, and advice on and assistance with the first stage of enumeration, for a study of oral health in 1 000 persons over the age of 3 years in urban areas. Follow up dental examinations were arranged by the Health Department.
- For the Centre for Ageing Studies in South Australia – Assistance in the design, development and conduct of a pretest for an Australian longitudinal study of ageing.
- For the Tasmanian Department of Health Services – Provision of an outposted ABS officer to assist with the design of an integrated statistical and management information system which will provide information for hospital management and, as a byproduct, statistical data for the ABS.
- For the Northern Territory Department of Health and Community Services – Assistance with the design, conduct and processing of a survey to obtain information on alcohol, tobacco and analgesics consumption patterns in urban areas.

### **Population surveys**

The population surveys component is responsible for the development and conduct of all ABS household surveys which use trained interviewers to collect information from survey respondents. The component also provides personnel to carry out interviewer-enumerated segments of economic statistics collections.

Activities and achievements during the year included:

- Enumeration of monthly population surveys to collect mainly labour statistics (see page 62).
- Phasing in of a redesigned sample for the monthly population survey, based on the results of the 1986 census of population and housing, with the sample size being reduced by 13%.
- Enumeration of a survey of disability, ageing and housing (see pages 64 and 65).
- Enumeration of an agricultural finance survey (see page 51).

- Preparation of the 1988-89 household expenditure survey (see page 65).

### **Integrated register**

The integrated register component is responsible for the maintenance of the ABS central register of businesses. Approximately 840 000 businesses are recorded on the register. Maintenance involves applying about one million changes to these records each year. The register plays a key role in the provision of integrated economic statistics by enabling consistent frameworks to be generated for ABS censuses and surveys.

Activities and achievements during the year included:

- Updating of the real estate agents, technical, legal, accounting and other business services division of the register in preparation for the conduct of a survey of services industries in respect of 1987-88.
- Development of an interactive transaction amendment system to facilitate edit resolution and reduce data entry workloads. This system is being developed to run on local area networks of micro computers and is expected to be in operation in all State Offices by the end of 1988.
- Commencement of preliminary work on updating the structure of large enterprises recorded on the register. To obtain updating information, a number of large companies have been visited by ABS officers and many more will be visited in 1988-89.

### **Computer operations and software**

The computer operations and software component is responsible for the installation and operation of the ABS's central computing equipment and communications network; for the installation and support of small scale technology (including microcomputers); for the development and support of computer software; for the support of databases; and for the conversion of data to machine-readable format.

Most of the ABS's statistical processing continues to be carried out on the Bureau's central computing installation (CCI) consisting of a Fujitsu M382 mainframe computer which is located in the ABS Central Office and linked to each of the State Offices through a communications network. The central installation also includes a Control Data 180/810 computer, used for processing economic statistics.

Activities and achievements during the year included:

- Processing of about 1.5 million separate jobs on the CCI. The workload is rising as the ABS attempts to improve its level of service and increase the efficiency of

its statistical operations. The CCI is running at close to full capacity on a three-shift, five-day basis, with some capacity spare at weekends.

- Enhancement of the CCI by the addition of more disk storage, which will allow further reduction of dependence on the mass storage subsystem and a consequent improvement in user service times.
- Continuation of the program, commenced last year, to replace all existing CCI terminals in the ABS Central and State Offices with more modern colour terminals, many with local processing capability. This conversion will be completed over the next two years.
- Further installation in the ABS of word processing equipment manufactured by Convergent Technologies. The installation period extends over two years during which time the equipment will be linked into a local area network. Central Office and most State Offices have now been equipped with the new word processing facilities; remaining State Offices will be equipped with alternative facilities and will be connected to provide electronic mail communication. Author facilities are provided by access to the Convergent Technologies equipment and also by the use of separate microcomputers.
- Continued expansion of the use of microcomputers within the ABS Central and State Offices. Most of the microcomputers installed are IBM-compatible machines but Apple Macintosh microcomputers are used for specific purposes such as forms design. Equipment used initially for the 1986 population census processing will soon have been redistributed to other areas of the ABS, thus doubling the number of microcomputers installed for general use. Much microcomputer usage is still on the basis of freestanding machines although the use of local area networks and micro-mainframe links is increasing.
- Progress towards the acquisition and installation of equipment and software to provide automated facilities for personnel and financial management. These systems, which will be introduced progressively over the next two years, will be based on distributed facilities (minicomputers, microcomputers and local area networks). As well as providing support to the staff responsible for administering these functions the new systems will provide improved management information.
- Planning for closer integration of data entry with statistical processing activities, either by use of computer aided on-line data entry or through replacement of bulk key entry by alternative data capture techniques such as scanning, electronic transmission or computer-aided telephone interviewing. This is part of the thrust towards multiskilling of staff arising from the Public Service-wide office structures review.

## **Computer applications**

The computer applications component develops and supports computerised systems for individual statistical and management applications.

Activities and achievements during the year included:

- Reviews of the processing systems for employer surveys, household surveys and public authority finance statistics.
- Upgrading of the processing systems for demographic statistics and retail surveys, following reviews of these systems in 1986-87.
- Major upgrading of the processing systems for foreign trade statistics (to implement the Harmonised Commodity Description and Coding System) and for household expenditure surveys.
- Development of processing systems for major labour costs surveys and wholesale prices statistics.
- Development of an on-line edit system for the integrated register using microcomputers linked to a local area network.
- Investigation of respondent marked OMR (optical mark recognition) forms and computer assisted coding for the 1991 population census.
- Establishment of an information centre for user support, and increased location of applications programmers with statistical staff, in order to ensure that resources expended on development of computer applications, including the resource represented by statistical staff doing their own programming, are strategically directed.

## **Coordination**

The coordination component consists of four sub-components: legislation and coordination; planning; public relations; and secretariat.

### *Legislation and coordination*

The legislation and coordination sub-component provides advice on all aspects of law affecting the ABS, including development of proposals for revision of Acts, Regulations and Ministerial Determinations; advice on and monitoring of statistical release practices under legislative provisions and determinations; and operation of Freedom of Information (FOI) legislation within the ABS (see Appendix 7 for further information).

In addition, the sub-component coordinates legal action, in a small number of cases where this is necessary, with a view to obtaining completed forms from persons and businesses included in ABS statistical collections. The ABS makes every effort to obtain willing co-operation from persons and businesses in its collections by requesting data under sub-sections 10(3) and 11(1) of the *Census and Statistics Act 1905*. Only extremely rarely has the ABS had to use the provisions of sub-sections 10(4) and 11(2), which provide for the Statistician to direct a person to supply data or answer a question, and, in default, to initiate prosecution action under section 14. Of the hundreds of thousands of households which have been selected in the monthly population surveys over the years, prosecution action has been taken in only a very small number of instances. No prosecution has ever been approved in relation to any household income or expenditure survey, or any health survey. In the case of business surveys and the population census the absolute number of prosecutions approved has been somewhat greater, but in no case does it approach one-hundredth of one per cent of persons or businesses in the collection. The numbers of notices of direction issued and numbers of prosecution actions approved in recent years are shown in the following table.

#### NOTICES OF DIRECTION ISSUED AND PROSECUTION ACTIONS APPROVED

Type of statistical collection	1984-85	1985-86	1986-87	1987-88
NOTICES OF DIRECTION ISSUED				
Number				
Population census	..	..	66	..
Household surveys	1	..	4	16
Business censuses and surveys	24	54	68	123
Total	25	54	138	139
PROSECUTION ACTIONS APPROVED (a)				
Number				
Population census	..	..	36	..
Household surveys	1	..	1	10
Business censuses and surveys	21	17	31	(b) 34
Total	22	17	68	(b) 44

(a) Approved by the Australian Statistician for referral to the Director of Public Prosecutions. Each prosecution action is counted under the year in which the corresponding notice of direction was issued. (b) Preliminary: 4 notices of direction issued to businesses in 1987-88 had not been responded to at the time of going to press and may result in additional prosecution actions being approved.

Through the legislation and coordination sub-component the ABS maintains contact with Commonwealth government departments and authorities in order to be aware of their statistical activities, their use of information from existing statistical collections and their current and future statistical needs. The Bureau plays a continuing role in developing greater coordination of statistical activities across

government agencies. In particular, it encourages the adoption of uniform standards and practices and fosters a coordinated approach to statistical development. (Contact with State government agencies is maintained through the statistical services and user liaison component – see page 67).

Activities and achievements in coordination during the year included:

- The administration of the outposted officer service, through which ABS officers are located in other Commonwealth government agencies on either a short or long term basis to provide professional statistical advice and assistance. At 30 June 1988 there were 11 outpostings with 9 Commonwealth agencies in Canberra.
- Continuation of reviews of existing and proposed statistical collections by other Commonwealth agencies, as required under the ABS statistical coordination arrangements. Each of these reviews involves the production, in conjunction with the agency directly responsible for the collection concerned, of a joint report on the compatibility of the statistics produced with data from other sources, the statistical quality of the work, the extent of duplication and the minimisation of respondent load. During 1987–88 the ABS was notified of 50 collections, of which it was decided to initiate joint reviews in 42 cases. There were 27 reviews completed in the year, of which 18 related to new collections and 9 to existing collections. As a result of the joint review process, improvements were made to most of the collections, which were then considered to be satisfactory from a statistical coordination viewpoint.
- The maintenance of a central register of Commonwealth statistical collections published as *Register of Commonwealth Statistical Collections* (ABS Catalogue No. 1114.0). This publication is designed to serve as a guide to collection activities and available statistics and to assist in coordinating collections by departments and authorities. The current edition of the register provides details of over 900 Commonwealth statistical collections and is expected to be updated in 1989.

#### *Planning*

The planning sub-component has responsibility for the ABS planning system, and the implementation of the ABS corporate plan, details of which were given in Chapter 2 of the 1986–87 report. Chapter 2 of the present report indicates progress made in relation to the corporate plan during 1987–88.

#### *Public relations*

The public relations sub-component aims to improve the Bureau's communication with respondents to statistical collections and other important target audiences.

Activities and achievements by this sub-component during the year included:

- An acceleration of efforts to improve the effectiveness of the ABS collection forms, including:
  - Preparation of standards for the design and development of forms. The standards were prepared with the assistance of the Communication Research Institute of Australia and field tested in various ABS statistical collections. The standards recognise that respondents must be able to complete a form accurately in a realistic amount of time and that the form must take into account the special characteristics of the respondents to whom it is directed.
  - Purchase of microcomputers with graphics software for use in Central and State Offices for form design.
  - Development of training courses which cover both the use of the graphics software and broader issues of form design, development and evaluation.
  - Establishment of a two person team in Canberra to provide a coordinated centre of advice, assistance and knowledge on forms design and performance to ABS collection managers.
- A range of work in support of statistical collections, including:
  - Development of a package of information material for the 1987-88 agricultural census. The aim was to provide material which would encourage improved response to the census and would inform the rural community of the benefits of the census in decision making. Subsequently, research was conducted to assess the impact of the information package.
  - Development and implementation of communication strategies directed at the mass media and the respondents for the 1987-88 services industries survey, the 1987-88 survey of motor vehicle use and the 1988 household expenditure survey.
  - Implementation of national media strategies to draw attention to the output from the 1985-86 retail census and the 1986-87 agricultural census.
  - Extension of a framework for media awareness training for ABS officers and handling of an increasing number of media inquiries. The greater effort directed towards media relations reflected both an awareness within the ABS of the importance of this activity and a greater interest by the media in the ABS and its products. Towards the end of the year the ABS had to respond to adverse, inaccurate media reports of proposals for a health survey. A case study prepared by the ABS's Director of Public Relations is included in Appendix 12.

- Assistance with implementation of the ABS corporate plan, particularly production of a videotape which featured senior managers discussing aspects of the plan and its impact on the Bureau. The videotape was used as a focal point in the many seminars and information sessions which introduced the corporate plan to ABS staff.

#### *Secretariat*

The secretariat sub-component provides ABS management with a range of services including ministerial and parliamentary liaison; secretariat support for high level internal and external meetings and conferences; and coordination of the Bureau's relations with international organisations and official statistical agencies in foreign countries, including the provision of assistance to developing countries.

During the year the ABS provided considerable technical assistance to official statistical agencies in developing countries in the Asia and Pacific region. The assistance took the form of visits to countries or regional centres by ABS staff, usually with fares and allowances being externally funded, to provide advisory services and training, and visits to Australia, by staff of official statistical agencies of countries in the region, for study tours and training. Activities in this area during the year included:

- Provision of lecturers to conduct three training courses organised by the South Pacific Commission for staff of official statistical agencies in the region.
- Provision of facilities in the ABS for study tours by nine senior staff of the National Statistics Office of the Philippines concerned with economic statistics.
- Assistance to the General Statistical Office of Vietnam in preparation for its 1989 population census. This involved visits to the ABS by Vietnamese staff, and visits by ABS staff to Vietnam.
- An exchange of official visits by the Australian Statistician and the Director General of the State Statistical Bureau of China. Following this, both agencies have agreed on continuing cooperation in a number of fields of statistics over the next few years.

## **6    CORPORATE SERVICES SUB-PROGRAM**

### **OBJECTIVE**

*The objective of the corporate services sub-program is to assist managers to achieve Australian Bureau of Statistics objectives through the provision of effective corporate management, and of efficient administration, planning and central support services.*

### **DESCRIPTION**

The diversity and cyclical nature of many of the activities involved in undertaking the ABS work program call for a wide range of human skills, technological support services, office support services and fluctuating staffing and physical accommodation requirements. These range from a continuing base of some 3 500 permanent staff from year to year supplemented by a number of temporary staff which peaks every five years to some 39 000 during the conduct of a census of population and housing.

The corporate services sub-program directly supports the ABS program by providing:

- Executive leadership.
- A corporate strategy for the implementation of the ABS work program.
- Personnel services, including salaries payment and conditions of service, establishments, recruitment, industrial relations, staff development and training.
- Financial control and accounting services including budgeting allocations and monitoring resource usage.
- General office services including accommodation, security, internal consultancy, methods and internal audit.
- Strategic planning for computer systems and technological support services including both mainframe and microcomputer installations and associated network communication facilities.

### **OUTPUTS OF THE SUB-PROGRAM**

The sub-program provides the organisational infrastructure, management and planning systems, staff and equipment necessary to undertake both the day-to-day operations and longer term strategic planning for the ABS program including personnel policies designed to attract, develop and retain high quality staff. It is

required to anticipate demand for services and supplies, provide control mechanisms to monitor resources according to component and sub-component allocations and priorities, advise management on trends and developments in the availability and usage of resources, and provide advice and assistance to managers in monitoring and improving the efficiency and effectiveness of specific areas of operation within in ABS.

The corporate services sub-program works in close contact with the central agencies (ie the Public Service Commission, Department of Industrial Relations, Department of Finance, Department of Administrative Services and the Australian Audit Office) in providing the necessary support to the ABS program.

## PERFORMANCE OF THE SUB-PROGRAM

The ABS Annual Report for 1986-87 included a list of performance indicators against which it was expected the performance of the sub-program would be shown in subsequent Annual Reports. Since that time, the ABS has further developed its approach to performance indicators, as described on page 35 (in relation to the statistical operations sub-program), and the list of indicators shown in the 1986-87 Annual Report was found to be inadequate. The indicators shown below are considered to be more useful.

### Cost of the corporate services sub-program

COST OF CORPORATE SERVICES SUB-PROGRAM AT CURRENT AND CONSTANT (a) PRICES

	Current prices		Constant prices (a)	
	1986-87	1987-88	1986-87	1987-88
Total cost (\$'000)	33 101	36 058	29 138	29 435
Cost per ABS staff year (\$)	(b) 7 087	9 825	(b) 6 238	8 020
Cost as a proportion of ABS expenditure -				
Including population census (%)	20.0	27.5	20.0	27.5
Excluding population census (%)	27.5	27.7	27.5	27.7

(a) 1984-85 prices. (b) Note: 1986-87 figures are lower than usual because of the effect, in the calculation of the figures, of the additional temporary staff in the Population Census Data Transcription Centre.

Excluding the effects of the 1986 census of population and housing, there was little change between 1986-87 and 1987-88 in the cost of this sub-program in both absolute terms and as a proportion of total ABS expenditure.

## Staff development

PROPORTION OF STAFF ACTIVITIES (b)	YEARS (a) SPENT ON STAFF DEVELOPMENT	1986-87	1987-88
		%	
Trainees		3.1	3.2
Trainers		0.5	0.6
Total		3.6	3.8

(a) Excludes Population Census Data Transcription Centre staff. (b) Excludes "on-the-job" training.

Consistent with sub-program objectives the level of staff development activity was increased in 1987-88.

## REVIEW OF COMPONENTS

The remainder of this chapter reviews the activities and achievements of each component of this sub-program during 1987-88.

### Executive

The top structure and senior staff of the ABS are shown in Appendix 2 and details of the composition of the ABS Senior Executive Service (SES) are shown in Appendix 5.

Agreement was reached with the Department of Finance during the year to a restructuring of the SES levels in the Central Office of the ABS. (The top structures of the State Offices of the ABS were reviewed about 18 months ago following a joint management review into management services and top management of the State Offices of the ABS.) In summary the changes to the SES in the ABS Central Office are as follows:

	Existing structure	New structure
Number of SES positions		
SES Level 6	..	(a)2
SES Level 4	1	6
SES Level 3	(b)7	..
SES Level 2	1	(a)18
SES Level 1	(c)19	..
Total	28	26

(a) Includes one Level 6 position and one Level 2 position for 4 years to work on improving the cost-effectiveness of the ABS. (b) One Level 3 position, provided on a short term basis, was filled for most of 1987-88. (c) An additional Level 1 position was not in use during 1987-88.

The new positions are progressively being filled and it is expected that the new structure will be fully implemented in the first half 1988-89.

During 1987-88, 30 ABS officers in the Senior Executive Service participated in staff development activities, as detailed below:

Activity	Number attended
Public Service Commission Top Management Program	1
Public Service Commission Senior Executive Management Program	1
Public Service Commission Senior Executive Development Program courses	22
Miscellaneous courses, seminars and conferences	82
<i>Total attendances at staff development activities</i>	<i>106</i>

The ABS has reviewed the training and development opportunities available to its senior managers as part of the overall upgrading of its manager development program. A successful off-site development weekend, involving all Central Office SES staff, was held during the year.

### Personnel management

The personnel management component is responsible for the operational aspects of personnel management, human resource development and the development and implementation of personnel policies and practices (including the ABS equal employment opportunity program and industrial democracy plan). It also has responsibility for job design, classification standards and industrial relations. In the broad, the role of the personnel management component is to assist ABS managers and staff at all levels by providing a working environment (as distinct from a physical environment) which will maximise the opportunity for individuals and work groups to make their best contribution to corporate objectives.

Activities and achievements during the year included:

- Commencement of a project to computerise personnel operations, with the objectives of improving the efficiency of these activities, making them less labour intensive, and creating more satisfying jobs.
- Commencement of decentralisation of administrative responsibilities to line managers. Line managers have been given formal delegations for establishment action and temporary staff moves. Plans are being developed to decentralise many other aspects of administrative work. Divisional administration units have been established to provide a more direct service to staff and line managers, thereby achieving efficiencies in overall administration.

- Recruitment of a total of 92 graduates, 63 in economics and statistics disciplines and 29 in computing related disciplines. The ABS conducted its own recruitment campaigns for graduates in the economics and statistics disciplines. In addition, 8 cadets (undergraduates) were recruited, 5 in economics disciplines and 3 in mathematics and statistics disciplines.
- Consultation with unions. The relationship with unions has generally been smooth. The consultative process has been efficient, with the result that there has not been the need for formal meetings of some subcommittees of the National Consultative Council. The only industrial action during the year centred around the second tier wage claim, but this was minor, with little or no disruption caused.
- Staff counselling service. The commitment to providing a pro-active welfare service has been formalised and expanded during the year. In order to achieve this goal, the staff counselling service has developed a close liaison with other service areas of Personnel, with a view to enhancing staff members' careers, personal and social needs.
- Revision of most ABS personnel policies and practices in the light of significant changes which were made during the year to the conditions of service for all public servants. As part of this process line managers are being provided with more detailed information and instructions on personnel matters to enable them to more effectively manage their staff.
- Continuation of the series of pilot studies in participative work design, which commenced during 1986-87. A variety of methodologies is being tested and evaluated in a range of different situations. The experience gained from the pilot studies has provided a foundation for the ABS to meet the work design aspirations contained in the corporate plan and the requirements of the second tier wage agreement.
- Facilitation of the implementation throughout the ABS of the "integrated office structure" under the second tier wage agreement. Work on phase 1 of restructuring, ie translating to the new structure and resolving anomalies, is progressing in consultation with staff and unions. Phase 2 of restructuring will commence during the latter part of 1988 and will involve detailed work design in accordance with the principles and objectives of the restructuring agreement between the Government and the unions, and will use methodologies developed from the pilot studies in participative work design.
- Progressive implementation of the ABS's industrial democracy (ID) plan, particularly by raising the awareness by staff of ID. Information sharing is being encouraged in workgroups and the documents *ABS Information Sharing Policy* and *Guide for Information Sharing for ABS Workgroups* were distributed to all staff. Participative management practices are being encouraged and have been incorporated into management courses. Implementation of the integrated

office structure under the second tier wage agreement involves adoption of participative management practices at all levels in the ABS, and this will necessitate a considerable training effort.

- Progressive implementation of the ABS's equal employment opportunity (EEO) program. Progress by the ABS on EEO generally is reported in Appendix 6.
- Development of a national policy and strategy for personnel development (PD) in the ABS. The key feature is that responsibility for PD is shared between individuals, their immediate supervisors or managers, and PD and training areas in each office. As part of the overall PD policy, national strategies are being developed in each of the major PD areas (statistician development, manager development, clerical development, career development, technical development and orientation). Project teams have been established in each of these areas. The manager development strategy is the most advanced of the projects with major components already developed and implemented. Increased demand for technical training has resulted from a combination of multiskilling needs, new technology and the growth in the number of mainframe and microcomputer terminals being installed.
- Provision of increased staff training, resulting from upgrading of the approach to training under the second tier wage agreement. Details of time spent by staff attending staff development activities are shown in the following table.

#### ATTENDANCE AT STAFF DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES (a)

Type of activity	1986-87	1987-88
Staff years		
Paid leave under studies assistance	34.0	28.1
Inhouse training -		
Technical (computing)	41.6	41.7
Other	16.8	21.7
External courses and conferences -		
Technical (computing)	12.4	7.1
Other		9.3
Interchange and other schemes	7.8	8.2
<i>Total</i>	<i>112.6</i>	<i>116.1</i>

(a) Excludes on-the-job training

Details of the proportion of total ABS staff usage spent on staff development activities are shown in the performance indicators for the corporate services sub-program (see page 79).

- Allocation of greater responsibility to line supervisors and managers for staff development activities, resulting in a need to develop techniques for measuring resource usage in on-the-job and other less formal methods of training and staff development. This will be addressed over the next twelve months.
- The sixth Statisticians SOcial SPOrts carnival (SOCSPO), in Sydney in January 1988, coinciding with the Bicentennial Celebrations. The purpose of SOCSPO is to generate goodwill and understanding among staff of the various ABS offices, by means of participation, in an informal atmosphere, in numerous social and sporting events. The New South Wales Office won the K.M. Archer trophy for the most successful team. The highlight of the week was the presentation of an Australia Day Achievement Award to the Host State Committee that organised the carnival. This was the first time an Australia Day Achievement Award has been presented in the ABS. Planning has already commenced for the seventh SOCSPO to be held in Alice Springs in April 1990.

### Resource management

The resource management component coordinates the preparation of financial and staff budgets, prepares submissions to central agencies and participates in negotiations with those agencies on these matters. It provides advice and guidance on estimating for finance and staff resources, makes recommendations on the allocation of approved resources and monitors and analyses expenditure and staff usage. The component is also responsible for the development and implementation of automated management information systems, including the provision of documentation and training. In addition, the component is responsible for internal audit activities, devising and conducting audits for corporate management, and advising on the existence, effectiveness, reliability and efficiency of the various systems of internal control within the ABS.

#### Activities and achievements during the year included:

- The introduction of a computer system, BUSY (Budget System), to monitor usage of average staffing levels (ASL) and expenditure and to supply management information to operational areas.
- Involvement in the development of specifications for the ABS FINANCE (Financial Information Network and National Control of Expenditure) System to be implemented progressively from August 1988.
- Reappraisal of the role of a unit within the ABS responsible for internal audit activities, following a major review during the previous year of the unit's workload. It was decided to examine the possibility of engaging external consultants to undertake traditional internal audit reviews of ABS State Offices.

- Attention to revised travel and purchasing procedures adopted in consequence of the implementation of the Block efficiency scrutiny recommendations, as well as attention to the usual range of administrative topics, in ABS audit reviews conducted in New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, Tasmania and the Northern Territory.
- Involvement of ABS auditors in new activities as a result of the impact of significant changes affecting the ABS as a whole. This furthered a trend, over recent years, away from traditional audit activities. The new activities included:
  - Involvement in proving the integrity of new automated systems introduced to achieve economies and greater efficiency in administration.
  - Involvement in initial evaluations of performance indicators.
  - Involvement in preparing risk assessments and implementing the recommendations of the Fraud Control Committee which was set up by the Government following a review in 1987 of systems for dealing with fraud on the Commonwealth.

ABS internal administration also benefited from 7 reviews by staff of the Australian Audit Office and one diagnostic study by them. Matters reviewed were in general found to be satisfactory and recommendations arising were addressed.

#### **Management support**

The management support component provides logistical support functions aimed at facilitating the achievement of corporate objectives. The support functions fall into five groups.

The first group covers accounts and travel. Functions include payment of all accounts, administration of ABS funds, booking and arranging logistical aspects of overseas travel, and provision of pay office and Collector of Public Moneys services.

The second group covers office accommodation, purchasing and general office services. Functions include planning, negotiating, and implementing accommodation, repairs and maintenance and occupational health and safety programs; purchasing; stores administration; and courier, interstate freight, mail, telephone, photocopying and printing services. The group also prepares financial estimates for these items and monitors subsequent expenditure.

The third group covers management of ABS assets, safekeeping of accountable forms, and waste handling, cleaning, registry, messenger, archives and general storage services.

The fourth group covers secretarial, word processing, typing, audio-typing, central telex and facsimile services and the coordination of RSI prevention and management issues.

The fifth group covers security issues affecting ABS staff, data and assets, including the issue of identity cards.

Activities and achievements during the year included:

- Implementation of Government reforms in accounts processing and domestic travel. The initial impact on accounts processing was streamlining and simplification of payment procedures. Australian Government Corporate Credit Cards were issued to all purchasing and accounting officers and have helped in the prompt payment of suppliers' accounts. (The number of accounts paid during the year was 17 503. Of these, 98.6% were paid by the due date, 1.3% were paid within the first month after the due date, and 0.1% were paid in the second month after the due date.) Implementation of the travel reforms presented many problems for ABS travellers. These are being overcome progressively in liaison with the Reform Team and the ABS's travel agent.
- Assistance with the specification, development and testing of the ABS FINANCE System to be introduced progressively from August 1988.
- Close liaison throughout the year with the Department of Administrative Services, the National Capital Development Commission and staff unions on the refurbishment of the Cameron Offices in Canberra. The Victorian, South Australian and Tasmanian Offices moved into new office accommodation during 1987-88. In Central Office accommodation pressures were eased by moves to additional office accommodation in Cameron Offices and Belconnen Chambers.
- Major initiatives in occupational health and safety (OHAS), involving ABS joint management/union OHAS committees, including:
  - Implementation of a smoke-free work environment policy in the ABS.
  - Issue of a brochure, *Working Comfortably with ABS*, to help staff avoid postural conditions and overuse injury.
  - Development of policies on OHAS and stress management.
  - Development of a computer based accident recording system.
- Continuation of a fall in the incidence of RSI in the ABS, with emphasis on staff training, early reporting of symptoms and adherence to rehabilitation programs.

The total number of staff with RSI symptoms has fallen from a peak of 174 in March 1986 to 72 in December 1987. The number of staff years lost from RSI has fallen from a peak of 15.8 in the December quarter 1985 to 4.8 in the December quarter 1987.

- Appointment of a Director of Security and staff to promote and protect the integrity and security of the Australian Bureau of Statistics staff, records, communications and property. They will address the functions of electronic data security, physical and personnel security and pass issue. A Protective Security Committee of senior managers has been formed to oversight the policies and procedures being developed.
- Absorption of keyboard staff into the new Administrative Service Officer classification structure. Their jobs will change significantly over the coming year to include a mixture of clerical and keyboarding tasks under the provisions of the second tier wage agreement.

#### **Management review**

The management review component is responsible for reviewing existing management services processes, guidelines and manuals to clarify line management responsibilities for various functions. The aim is to simplify procedures wherever possible, look for possibilities for devolving responsibilities to line managers, and to drop low priority work altogether. The overall objective is to increase the effectiveness of existing resources and save resources for redeployment on higher priority work. The component is also responsible for coordinating the provision of administrative support facilities for major ABS projects such as the census of population and housing.

Activities and achievements during the year included:

- Development and implementation of ABS FINANCE System. In November 1987 an agreement was exchanged with O & O Systems Consultants Pty Ltd to modify the finance system developed initially for the former Department of Trade. The system includes purchasing, payment of accounts, administration of assets and office requisites modules as well as estimating and forecasting modules and will significantly improve the relevance and timeliness of financial reports available to executive and line management. The system is scheduled to commence operation in Canberra in August 1988 and in State Offices during 1988-89. Most of the resources available to this component are currently devoted to the coordination, development and implementation of the system.
- Preliminary work on identifying potential cost centres within the organisation and in specifying the information requirements of cost centre managers. Further development of this activity is dependent on the implementation of the ABS FINANCE System and other information systems based on systematic attribution of costs for products and services.

- Coordination and monitoring of consultancy agreements. During the year guidelines on the hiring of consultants were finalised and issued. Procedures are currently being developed for the devolution of responsibility for engagement of consultants to line managers.
- Development and review of performance indicators. As part of the implementation of program budgeting, performance indicators were developed and reviewed for the two ABS sub-programs. Information papers and guidance were provided to program and corporate managers to assist in the development of performance indicators.
- Closure of the 1986 Population Census Data Transcription Centre (DTC) after completion of the conversion of data from the 1986 census forms to computer records. The outstanding administrative work associated with the DTC will be undertaken in Canberra together with initial administrative planning for the 1991 population census.

### **Computer technical services and planning**

The computer technical services and planning component provides information technology planning and a range of technical support services. The planning activities cover large- and small-scale computing, communications facilities and related technologies. The technical support services include technology training, research into new technologies and support for software elements of the statistical computing environment.

Activities and achievements during the year included:

- Drafting of the first ABS information technology strategic plan. The plan is based on guidelines issued by the Department of Finance and builds on the objectives and strategies of the ABS corporate plan. More specific working plans for internal use are being developed and revised by individual work groups.
- Use of microcomputers. The use of microcomputers and other small scale technology is becoming more widespread in the ABS for statistical and management tasks. Increasingly these devices are being interconnected using local area networks providing access to the ABS mainframe computing facilities. Electronic mail facilities have been installed on the ABS word processing network and will be extended to microcomputers giving electronic mail coverage to the majority of ABS supervisor and management staff.
- Continued evaluation of new software facilities to make the information technology environment more effective and efficient for statistical data processing. Facilities installed or under evaluation include extended use of graphics, desk top publication systems, relational data base systems and cross

classified data base systems. Prototype systems using expert system approaches have been implemented successfully in several areas and are being extended to cover full production capability. Computer aided software engineering facilities are also being evaluated and are expected to lead to valuable gains in programmer productivity in the near future.

- Continued examination of new technologies and facilities for all aspects of data processing. Particular emphasis is given to the labour intensive data capture process and new means of disseminating statistical data both electronically and on paper. The results of pilot schemes for computer assisted telephone interviewing and optical character reading are encouraging and further work will be carried out in these areas. As well as improved publishing facilities ABS has entered into a joint commercial venture for the marketing of population census statistics on compact disks, CDATA 86.
- Continued efforts in graduate recruitment and staff training. No relief is in sight from the difficulties experienced by the ABS in recruitment, retention and training of ADP staff, in the face of high turnover and competition from both private and public sector bodies. As a result, the ABS continues to put much effort into graduate recruitment processes and has managed to satisfy its computer systems officer intake requirements this year. The heavy commitments to general training caused by staff recruitment and turnover is exacerbated by the demand for small-scale technology training which can be expected to grow significantly as end-user computing expands. ABS is seeking to exploit alternative means of training such as external courses and computer-based training.

## **APPENDIXES**

## Appendix 1 THE ABS PROGRAM BUDGETING STRUCTURE

<i>Program</i>	<i>Sub-programs</i>	<i>Components</i>
Australian Bureau of Statistics	Statistical operations	Information services National accounts International accounts Trade Prices Financial institutions Public finance Agriculture Mining Energy Manufacturing Distribution and services industries Construction Transport and tourism Business surveys Science and technology Integration, classification and development Economic censuses system Population census Demography Labour Social Time series Mathematical statistics Statistical services and user liaison Population surveys Integrated register Computer operations and software Computer applications Coordination
Corporate services		Executive Personnel management Resource management Management support Management review Computer technical services and planning

## Appendix 2 TOP STRUCTURE AND STAFF OF THE ABS WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR PROGRAM ELEMENTS

<i>Top structure and Staff</i>	<i>Responsibility for program components</i>
Australian Statistician <i>I. Castles, AO, OBE</i>	Executive
Deputy Australian Statistician <i>W. McLennan</i>	
Head, Resource Effectiveness Project <i>J.L. Carroll, AM</i>	
CENTRAL OFFICE (a)	
Economic Accounts Division <i>F.J. von Reibnitz</i>	
International Accounts Branch <i>B.J. Dunlop</i>	International accounts
National Accounts Branch <i>P.J. McCarthy</i>	National accounts
Prices Branch <i>M.B. Booth</i>	Prices
Public and Private Finance Branch <i>D.C. Efford</i>	Financial institutions Public finance
Economic Censuses and Surveys Division <i>G.J. Sarossy</i>	
Construction and Business Surveys Branch <i>A.J. Whittington</i>	Construction Business surveys Economic censuses system
Manufacturing and Distribution Branch <i>R.P. Green</i>	Mining Manufacturing Distribution and services industries Integration, classification and development
Trade and Transport Branch <i>P.G. Howell</i>	Trade Energy Transport and tourism

(a) The top structure in Central Office is expected to be changed in the first half of 1988-89.

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*Top structure and Staff**Responsibility for program components*

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Demography, Labour and Social Division

*T.J. Skinner*

Labour Branch

*R. Phillips (Acting)*

Labour

Population Census and Demography Branch

*J.K. Cornish*

Population census

Demography

Social Branch

*M.D. Giles*

Social

Statistical and User Services Division

*D.J. Trewin*

Data Services Branch

*J.H. Struik*

Agriculture

Science and technology

Integrated register

Statistical Services Branch

*D.C. Leaver*

Mathematical statistics

Population surveys

User Services Branch

*D.A. Harding*

Information services

Time series

Computer Services Division

*W.O. Egan*

Technology Planning Branch

*B.H. Crook*

Computer technical services and planning (part)

Applications Branch

*P. Pentony (Acting)*

Computer applications

Operations and Software Branch

*J.V. Crocker*

Computer operations and software

Technical Services Branch

*B.M. Fitzpatrick*

Computer technical services and planning (part)

Coordination and Management Division

*R.W. Edwards*

Coordination Branch

*G.C. Sims*

Coordination

Personnel Management Branch

*J.W. Maurer*

Personnel management

Resource Management Branch

*C.J. Dent*

Resource management

Management support

Management review

**STATE AND NORTHERN TERRITORY OFFICES**

New South Wales <i>J.F. Wilson</i>	Statistical services and user liaison (New South Wales)
Victoria <i>E.D. Bourke</i>	Statistical services and user liaison (Victoria)
Queensland <i>D.N. Allen</i>	Statistical services and user liaison (Queensland)
Western Australia <i>B.N. Pink</i>	Statistical services and user liaison (Western Australia)
South Australia <i>R.J. Rogers</i>	Statistical services and user liaison (South Australia)
Tasmania <i>S. Jackson</i>	Statistical services and user liaison (Tasmania)
Northern Territory <i>P. Gardner</i>	Statistical services and user liaison (Northern Territory)

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**Appendix 3 ABS PROGRAM EXPENDITURE AND RECEIPTS:  
1986-87, 1987-88 AND ESTIMATES: 1988-89**

	1986-87	1987-88	1988-89	
	Actual	Total appropriation	Actual	Estimates(a)
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>				
Salaries etc (b) -				
Salaries	107 126	97 435	96 733	96 466
Overtime	2 219	1 135	1 065	900
Total 671.1.01	109 345	98 570	97 799	97 366
Administrative expenses (b) -				
Travel and subsistence	3 527	2 786	2 829	2 589
Office requisites	5 656	5 750	5 772	7 165
Postage and telephones	5 808	5 731	5 964	5 794
Computer services	3 728	3 906	3 884	3 995
Incidentals (c)	4 926	4 832	3 992	4 327
Payments to agents	(d) 26 387	5 963	5 953	6 741
Sub-total	50 031	28 968	28 394	30 611
LESS ABS share of miscellaneous revenue			228	
Total 671.1.02	50 031	28 968	28 166	30 611
Total sub-division 671.1	159 376	127 538	125 964	127 977
Compensation and legal expenses	1 370	1 409	1 393	714
Total sub-division 671.2	1 370	1 409	1 393	714
Total division 671	160 746	128 947	127 358	128 691
Plant and equipment	4 493	4 782	3 529	4 872
Total division 979	4 493	4 782	3 629	4 872
Special appropriations (b)-				
Australian Statistician	93	97	94	(b)
Australian Statistics Advisory Council	16	19	18	(b)
Total special appropriations	108	116	112	(b)
Total expenditure	(d) 165 347	133 845	131 098	133 563
<b>RECEIPTS</b>				
Miscellaneous revenue -				
Sale of statistical products -				
Publications (e)	484	(f) 3 261	(f) 2 287	(f) 3 628
Other products (g)	1	439	(f) 1 170	(f) 878
Charges for special statistical services (h)	450			(f) 418
Other revenue	1			96
Sub-total	933	3 700	3 456	5 022
LESS ABS share of miscellaneous revenue	933	3 700	3 228	5 020
Total miscellaneous revenue				
<b>TOTAL OUTLAYS</b>	<b>164 413</b>	<b>130 145</b>	<b>127 870</b>	<b>128 543</b>

(a) As included in Appropriation Bills Nos 1 and 2. (b) For 1988-89, salaries etc and administrative expenses include expenditure of the type shown as special appropriations for earlier years. (c) Includes fringe benefits tax. (d) Includes expenditure associated with the conduct of the 1986 census of population and housing (totalling \$44 832m in 1986-87). (e) Excludes receipts by the Australian Government Publishing Service from sales of ABS publications. (f) Increased revenue from enhanced cost recovery on ABS products and services. (g) Includes special compilations of foreign trade statistics. (h) Includes special extractions of statistics and statistical consultancy services.

Note: Any differences between totals and sums of components are due to rounding.

## Appendix 4 ABS PROGRAM EXPENDITURE - ESTIMATES OF EXPENDITURE BY COMPONENT

The table opposite (on page 97) shows the expenditure for the ABS program in each of the three years 1985-86 to 1987-88, with an estimated dissection by program component. An estimate of "direct" expenditure is shown for each component, and an estimate of "total" expenditure is shown for each "statistical" component. The "total" expenditure for each "statistical" component is also shown as a percentage of ABS program expenditure (excluding "total" expenditure on the population census component and plant and equipment).

These estimates have been compiled on the following basis:

- **Direct expenditure** is all expenditure directly attributable to each component (such as salaries attributed on the basis of actual payments, and direct expenditure on overtime, and travel and subsistence) plus an estimated distribution of major corporate service overheads (such as postage, telephones, printing etc). General printing costs of ABS publications are attributed to the information services component. Expenditure on plant and equipment is not attributed to individual components (except for the population census component).
- **Total expenditure**, for each "statistical" component, is direct expenditure for the component plus an allocation of the direct expenditure for "service" components according to estimated usage of the services.

This method of dissecting ABS expenditure was developed some years ago by the ABS to assist in its internal planning. It differs from the standard procedures recently introduced for cost attribution in Government program budgeting. In future years the ABS hopes to move, in its ongoing accounting systems, to a basis of cost attribution which will permit the preparation of details of expenditure by component using standard program budgeting accounting procedures.

The table below gives a comparison between the dissection of ABS program expenditure by sub-program on the direct expenditure basis (as shown in the table opposite) and the dissection on the program budgeting (PB) basis (as shown elsewhere in this Report):

	1985-86		1986-87		1987-88	
	Direct basis	PB basis	Direct basis	PB basis	Direct basis	PB basis
					\$'000	
Statistical operations sub-program (a)	104 177	94 219	143 148	132 246	105 962	95 041
Corporate services sub-program	17 164	29 742	19 830	33 101	21 507	36 058
Plant and equipment (b)	2 620	..	2 369	..	3 629	..
<i>ABS program</i>	<i>123 961</i>	<i>123 961</i>	<i>165 347</i>	<i>165 347</i>	<i>131 098</i>	<i>131 098</i>

(a) Includes plant and equipment for population census, on direct expenditure basis. Net of ABS share of revenue. (b) Attributed to statistical operations sub-program on PB basis. Excludes plant and equipment for population census.

Note: Any differences between totals and sums of components are due to rounding.

**ABS PROGRAM - ESTIMATES OF EXPENDITURE BY COMPONENT: 1985-86 TO 1987-88**

Program element	1985-86			1986-87			1987-88		
	Direct	Total(a)	%	Direct	Total(a)	%	Direct	Total(a)	%
\$'000	\$'000	%	\$'000	\$'000	%	\$'000	\$'000	%	
<b>STATISTICAL OPERATIONS</b>									
Information services	6 429	..	..	6 410	..	..	7 472	..	..
National accounts (b)	1 724	3 194	3.0	1 874	3 168	2.9	2 069	3 605	3.0
International accounts	2 370	4 205	3.9	2 391	3 905	3.6	2 410	4 270	3.5
Trade	2 651	5 763	5.4	2 546	5 552	5.1	2 602	6 082	5.0
Prices	3 604	5 370	5.0	3 774	6 102	5.6	3 848	6 056	5.0
Financial institutions	1 112	1 952	1.8	1 218	2 180	2.0	1 246	2 267	1.9
Public finance	2 427	4 786	4.5	2 787	5 039	4.6	2 824	5 113	4.2
Agriculture	3 671	8 763	8.2	3 725	8 778	8.1	4 308	10 167	8.4
Mining	545	1 294	1.2	585	1 286	1.2	621	1 161	1.0
Energy	391	2 167	2.0	252	610	0.6	586	1 459	1.2
Manufacturing	3 545	7 899	7.4	2 205	4 711	4.3	3 737	7 677	6.3
Distribution and services industries	2 360	6 754	6.3	4 503	14 630	13.5	3 672	12 288	10.1
Construction	2 997	8 582	8.0	2 505	5 152	4.7	2 338	4 776	3.9
Transport and tourism	2 381	4 870	4.5	1 512	2 840	2.6	1 762	3 599	3.0
Business surveys	1 915	4 224	3.9	1 566	3 994	3.7	1 985	3 099	3.2
Science and technology	285	592	0.6	236	460	0.4	297	546	0.5
Integration, classification and development	1 157	..	..	1 245	..	..	1 444	..	..
Economic censuses system	1 204	..	..	2 504	..	..	1 400	..	..
Demography	2 101	3 979	3.7	2 208	4 207	3.9	2 257	4 399	3.6
Labour	5 937	22 203	20.7	5 413	24 556	22.6	6 930	26 951	22.2
Social	5 599	9 447	8.8	5 864	10 342	9.5	5 795	11 840	9.8
Time series	918	1 008	0.9	967	1 090	1.0	1 110	1 266	1.0
Mathematical statistics	1 467	..	..	1 537	..	..	1 663	..	..
Statistical services and user liaison	2 006	(c)	..	1 809	(c)	..	2 498	3 766	3.1
Population surveys	10 088	..	..	11 022	..	..	12 223	..	..
Integrated register	4 545	..	..	4 470	..	..	4 642	..	..
Data management (d)	255	..	..	277	..	..	86	..	..
Computer operations and software	12 171	..	..	12 443	..	..	12 826	..	..
Computer applications	6 037	..	..	6 014	..	..	6 635	..	..
Co-ordination	1 655	..	..	1 420	..	..	1 509	..	..
<b>CORPORATE SERVICES</b>									
Executive	2 832	..	..	3 337	..	..	4 077	..	..
Personnel management	4 646	..	..	5 677	..	..	6 194	..	..
Resource management	796	..	..	910	..	..	925	..	..
Management support	6 116	..	..	6 639	..	..	6 744	..	..
Management review	..	..	..	62	..	..	223	..	..
Computer technical services and planning	2 570	..	..	3 174	..	..	3 344	..	..
Non ABS (e)	204	204	0.2	31	31	..	..	..	..
<b>TOTAL EXCL POPULATION CENSUS AND PLANT AND EQUIPMENT</b>									
Population census (f)	10 633	14 087	..	47 569	54 348	..	3 396	6 502	..
Plant and equipment (g)	2 620	2 620	..	2 369	2 369	..	3 629	3 629	..
LESS ABS share of revenue	..	..	..	..	..	..	228	228	..
<b>ABS PROGRAM TOTAL</b>	<b>123 961</b>	<b>123 961</b>	<b>..</b>	<b>165 347</b>	<b>165 347</b>	<b>..</b>	<b>131 098</b>	<b>131 098</b>	<b>..</b>

(a) Statistical components only; includes estimated costs of service components allocated in accordance with usage on statistical components. (b) The costs of collecting data used in compiling the national accounts are included in the respective subject matter components. (c) This component was treated as a service component in these years. Estimates of its total costs are \$3.02m in 1985-86 and \$2.73m in 1986-87. (d) This component was discontinued early in 1987-88. (e) Telephone costs incurred by non-ABS tenants of Cameron Offices (subsequently recovered). (f) Includes plant and equipment for population census. (g) Includes expenditure on the computer enhancement program. Excludes plant and equipment for population census.

Note: Any differences between totals and sums of components are due to rounding.

## Appendix 5 ABS STAFFING

TABLE 5.1 DISTRIBUTION OF ABS STAFF BY PROGRAM ELEMENT AND LOCATION

	1986-87							1987-88				
	Total	ACT	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	NT	DTC (a)	Total	
Average staff levels (b)												
<b>STATISTICAL OPERATIONS</b>												
Information services	182	81	33	26	20	14	13	8	2	..	198	
National accounts	58	56	1	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	59	
International accounts	73	70	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	70	
Trade	90	70	..	..	3	6	4	1	..	..	83	
Prices	121	51	18	15	9	8	7	4	3	..	116	
Financial institutions	40	38	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	38	
Public finance	84	30	12	13	9	7	6	4	1	..	82	
Agriculture	134	27	29	25	24	13	14	6	..	..	139	
Mining	21	4	6	3	5	2	..	1	1	..	21	
Energy	7	12	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	..	17	
Manufacturing	68	17	36	35	11	9	8	3	..	..	119	
Distribution and services industries	160	22	23	19	34	9	8	4	2	..	120	
Construction	89	17	17	17	10	7	6	4	2	..	80	
Transport and tourism	54	18	8	4	14	5	4	3	1	..	57	
Business surveys	67	33	9	7	5	3	4	1	1	..	63	
Science and technology	8	9	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	9	
Integration, classification and development	38	35	1	1	1	1	2	..	..	..	41	
Economic censuses system	90	23	7	5	10	2	1	1	..	..	48	
Population census	1 081	50	4	3	2	2	2	2	1	26	92	
Demography	75	25	13	11	8	4	4	2	3	..	71	
Labour	191	92	44	34	17	11	12	8	6	..	223	
Social	173	82	27	14	24	10	12	5	1	..	176	
Time series	29	30	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	30	
Mathematical statistics	44	49	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	49	
Statistical services and user liaison	61	..	13	14	12	9	12	8	1	..	69	
Population surveys	204	34	37	31	32	20	19	12	4	..	190	
Integrated register	158	24	46	34	25	12	10	3	2	..	155	
Data management (c)	6	2	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	2	
Computer operations and software	346	156	43	34	32	23	23	13	..	1	324	
Computer applications	183	115	15	13	12	11	13	11	..	..	191	
Coordination	34	34	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	34	
<i>Total</i>	3 969	1 306	443	360	321	188	185	105	32	27	2 966	
<b>CORPORATE SERVICES</b>												
Executive	58	32	4	5	4	4	4	4	3	..	61	
Personnel management	170	83	18	19	17	13	11	8	3	..	172	
Resource management	25	15	3	2	2	1	..	..	..	..	24	
Management support	272	121	32	34	20	14	19	10	4	..	255	
Management review	1	5	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	6	
Computer technical services and planning	88	82	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	82	
Paid inoperative staff (d)	88	52	13	14	8	8	4	4	1	..	104	
<i>Total</i>	702	390	71	74	50	41	38	27	11	1	704	
<b>TOTAL AVERAGE STAFF LEVELS</b>												
	4 671	1 696	514	434	371	230	223	132	43	28	3 670	

(a) 1986 Population Census Data Transcription Centre located in Sydney. (b) Comprises full-time staff and part-time staff at their have been classified to that component which occupies most of their time. (c) This component was discontinued early in 1987-88. (d) For example staff on long service leave, extended sick leave, etc for periods of twelve weeks or longer.

Note: The symbol .. can mean either "less than half" or "nil". Any differences between totals and sums of components are due to rounding.

TABLE 5.2 ABS STAFF EMPLOYED UNDER THE PUBLIC SERVICE ACT 1922 BY LOCATION, SEX, AND CLASSIFICATION, AT 30 JUNE 1988 (a)

Classification	ACT	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	NT	Total
MEN									
Number									
<i>PAID OPERATIVE AND INOPERATIVE STAFF (b) -</i>									
Australian Statistician	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1
Senior Executive Service	28	1	1	2	1	1	..	..	34
Administrative Service Officer (c) -									
Class 8	51	4	4	3	3	2	1	1	69
Class 7	111	9	9	5	3	4	3	..	144
Class 6	259	22	27	21	13	18	14	2	376
Class 5	113	37	32	34	31	24	10	4	285
Class 4	80	41	31	25	18	24	15	5	239
Class 3	64	58	50	27	23	28	24	9	283
Class 2	62	48	33	30	14	15	13	2	217
Class 1	42	17	14	12	20	9	8	1	123
Computer Systems Officer -									
Grades 4 and 5	26	1	..	1	1	1	1	..	31
Grade 3	43	..	..	1	1	2	1	..	48
Grade 2	70	4	3	2	5	4	4	..	92
Grade 1	42	..	5	3	3	3	3	..	59
Librarians	2	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	2
Other classifications	16	2	5	2	..	2	..	..	27
<i>Total paid operative and inoperative staff</i>	1 010	244	214	168	136	137	97	24	2 030
<i>UNPAID INOPERATIVE STAFF</i>	65	13	10	4	7	6	1	..	106
<i>TOTAL STAFF AT 30 JUNE 1988</i>	1 075	257	224	172	143	143	98	24	2 136
WOMEN									
Number									
<i>PAID OPERATIVE AND INOPERATIVE STAFF (b) -</i>									
Australian Statistician	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Senior Executive Service	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1
Administrative Service Officer (c) -									
Class 8	12	1	..	1	..	..	..	..	14
Class 7	29	2	2	1	..	..	..	..	34
Class 6	87	3	6	6	6	3	1	..	112
Class 5	62	12	7	6	4	3	..	1	95
Class 4	90	28	35	16	17	12	5	3	206
Class 3	109	44	35	39	25	18	11	6	287
Class 2	144	72	41	47	23	29	14	6	376
Class 1	138	64	39	45	43	20	14	4	367
Computer Systems Officer -									
Grades 4 and 5	6	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	7
Grade 3	13	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	14
Grade 2	28	1	1	..	1	1	2	..	34
Grade 1	9	4	1	1	1	..	..	..	16
Librarians	8	1	1	1	..	..	..	..	11
Other classifications	10	1	5	3	..	5	1	..	25
<i>Total paid operative and inoperative staff</i>	746	235	173	166	120	91	48	20	1 599
<i>UNPAID INOPERATIVE STAFF</i>	56	19	23	13	6	5	2	2	126
<i>TOTAL STAFF AT 30 JUNE 1988</i>	802	254	196	179	126	96	50	22	1 725

For footnotes see end of table.

TABLE 5.2 ABS STAFF EMPLOYED UNDER THE PUBLIC SERVICE ACT 1922 BY LOCATION, SEX, AND CLASSIFICATION, AT 30 JUNE 1988 (a) (continued)

Classification	ACT	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	NT	Total
TOTAL									
Number									
<i>PAID OPERATIVE AND INOPERATIVE STAFF (b) -</i>									
Australian Statistician	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1
Senior Executive Service	29	1	1	2	1	1	..	..	35
Administrative Service Officer (c) -									
Class 8	63	5	4	4	3	2	1	1	83
Class 7	140	11	11	6	3	4	3	..	178
Class 6	346	25	33	27	19	21	15	2	488
Class 5	175	49	39	40	35	27	10	5	380
Class 4	170	69	66	41	35	36	20	8	445
Class 3	173	102	85	66	48	46	35	15	570
Class 2	206	120	74	77	37	44	27	8	593
Class 1	180	81	53	57	63	29	22	5	490
Computer Systems Officer -									
Grades 4 and 5	32	2	-	1	1	1	1	..	38
Grade 3	56	1	..	1	1	2	1	..	62
Grade 2	98	5	4	2	6	5	6	..	126
Grade 1	51	4	6	4	4	3	3	..	75
Librarians	10	1	1	1	..	..	..	..	13
Other classifications	26	3	10	5	..	7	1	..	52
<i>Total paid operative and inoperative staff</i>	<i>1 756</i>	<i>479</i>	<i>387</i>	<i>334</i>	<i>256</i>	<i>228</i>	<i>145</i>	<i>44</i>	<i>3 629</i>
<i>UNPAID INOPERATIVE STAFF</i>	<i>121</i>	<i>32</i>	<i>33</i>	<i>17</i>	<i>13</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>232</i>
<i>TOTAL STAFF AT 30 JUNE 1988</i>	<i>1 877</i>	<i>511</i>	<i>420</i>	<i>351</i>	<i>269</i>	<i>239</i>	<i>148</i>	<i>46</i>	<i>3 861</i>

(a) Includes, also, the Australian Statistician, who is a statutory office holder appointed under the *Australian Bureau of Statistics Act 1975*. Excludes unpaid operative staff (eg staff on leave without pay for periods of less than 12 weeks); the number of such staff is very small. Excludes, also, casual staff employed for short periods for population surveys. (b) Being paid at the classification shown at 30 June 1988. (c) Includes Research Officer classifications with same maximum salaries. The classifications shown came into effect on 24 December 1987 as a result of the office structures review.

**TABLE 5.3 ABS STAFF EMPLOYED UNDER THE PUBLIC SERVICE ACT 1922 BY EMPLOYMENT STATUS, SEX AND CLASSIFICATION, AT 30 JUNE 1988 (a)**

Classification	Permanent			Temporary			Total		
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES									
Number									
<i>PAID OPERATIVE AND INOPERATIVE STAFF (b) -</i>									
Australian Statistician	1	..	1	..	..	..	1	..	1
Senior Executive Service	34	1	35	..	..	..	34	1	35
Administrative Service Officer (c) -									
Class 8	68	12	80	1	1	2	69	13	82
Class 7	144	31	175	..	..	..	144	31	175
Class 6	373	102	475	1	2	3	374	104	478
Class 5	281	91	372	2	..	2	283	91	374
Class 4	237	192	429	1	1	2	238	193	431
Class 3	278	278	556	3	4	7	281	282	563
Class 2	206	354	560	9	12	21	215	366	581
Class 1	91	256	347	29	89	118	120	345	465
Computer Systems Officers -									
Grades 4 and 5	31	6	37	..	..	..	31	6	37
Grade 3	47	13	60	..	..	..	47	13	60
Grade 2	90	21	111	..	2	2	90	23	113
Grade 1	57	14	71	1	1	2	58	15	73
Librarians	1	8	9	1	3	4	2	11	13
Other classifications	14	3	17	13	21	34	27	24	51
<i>Total paid operative and inoperative staff</i>	<i>1 953</i>	<i>1 382</i>	<i>3 335</i>	<i>61</i>	<i>136</i>	<i>197</i>	<i>2 014</i>	<i>1 518</i>	<i>3 532</i>
<i>UNPAID INOPERATIVE STAFF</i>	<i>105</i>	<i>116</i>	<i>221</i>	<i>..</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>105</i>	<i>121</i>	<i>226</i>
<i>TOTAL STAFF AT 30 JUNE 1988</i>	<i>2 058</i>	<i>1 498</i>	<i>3 536</i>	<i>61</i>	<i>141</i>	<i>202</i>	<i>2 119</i>	<i>1 639</i>	<i>3 758</i>
PART-TIME EMPLOYEES									
Number									
<i>PAID OPERATIVE AND INOPERATIVE STAFF (b) -</i>									
Australian Statistician	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Senior Executive Service	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Administrative Service Officer (c) -									
Class 8	..	1	1	..	..	..	..	1	1
Class 7	..	3	3	..	..	..	..	3	3
Class 6	2	8	10	..	..	..	2	8	10
Class 5	2	4	6	..	..	..	2	4	6
Class 4	1	10	11	..	3	3	1	13	14
Class 3	2	5	7	..	..	..	2	5	7
Class 2	2	10	12	..	..	..	2	10	12
Class 1	2	15	17	1	7	8	3	22	25
Computer Systems Officer -									
Grades 4 and 5	..	1	1	..	..	..	..	1	1
Grade 3	1	1	2	..	..	..	1	1	2
Grade 2	2	11	13	..	..	..	2	11	13
Grade 1	1	1	2	..	..	..	1	1	2
Librarians	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Other classifications	..	1	1	..	..	..	..	1	1
<i>Total paid operative and inoperative staff</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>71</i>	<i>86</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>81</i>	<i>97</i>
<i>UNPAID INOPERATIVE STAFF</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>..</i>	<i>..</i>	<i>..</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>TOTAL STAFF AT 30 JUNE 1988</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>76</i>	<i>92</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>17</i>	<i>86</i>	<i>103</i>

(a), (b) and (c) See footnotes to Table 5.2.

TABLE 5.3 ABS STAFF EMPLOYED UNDER THE PUBLIC SERVICE ACT 1922 BY EMPLOYMENT STATUS, SEX AND CLASSIFICATION, AT 30 JUNE 1988 (a) (continued)

Classification	Permanent			Temporary			Total		
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
TOTAL									
Number									
<i>PAID OPERATIVE AND INOPERATIVE STAFF (b) -</i>									
Australian Statistician	1	-	1	"	"	"	1	"	1
Senior Executive Service	34	1	35	-	-	-	34	1	35
Administrative Service Officer (c) -									
Class 8	68	13	81	1	1	2	69	14	83
Class 7	144	34	178	-	-	-	144	34	178
Class 6	375	110	485	1	2	3	376	112	488
Class 5	283	95	378	2	-	2	285	95	380
Class 4	238	202	440	1	4	5	239	206	445
Class 3	280	283	563	3	4	7	283	287	570
Class 2	208	364	572	9	12	21	217	376	593
Class 1	93	271	364	30	96	126	123	367	490
Computer Systems Officer -									
Grades 4 and 5	31	7	38	-	-	-	31	7	38
Grade 3	48	14	62	-	-	-	48	14	62
Grade 2	92	32	124	-	2	2	92	34	126
Grade 1	58	15	73	1	1	2	59	16	75
Librarians	1	8	9	1	3	4	2	11	13
Other classifications	14	4	18	13	21	34	27	25	52
<i>Total paid operative and inoperative staff</i>	<i>1 968</i>	<i>1 453</i>	<i>3 421</i>	<i>62</i>	<i>146</i>	<i>208</i>	<i>2 030</i>	<i>1 599</i>	<i>3 629</i>
<i>UNPAID INOPERATIVE STAFF</i>	<i>106</i>	<i>121</i>	<i>227</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>106</i>	<i>126</i>	<i>232</i>
<i>TOTAL STAFF AT 30 JUNE 1988</i>	<i>2 074</i>	<i>1 574</i>	<i>3 648</i>	<i>62</i>	<i>151</i>	<i>213</i>	<i>2 136</i>	<i>1 725</i>	<i>3 861</i>

(a), (b) and (c) See footnotes to Table 5.2.

TABLE 5.4 ABS STAFF EMPLOYED UNDER THE PUBLIC SERVICE ACT 1922, IN EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY TARGET GROUPS, BY CLASSIFICATION, AT 30 JUNE 1988 (a)

Classification	NESB1	NESB2	ATSI	PWD	Women	Total ABS staff					
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.		
<i>PAID OPERATIVE AND INOPERATIVE STAFF (b) -</i>											
Australian Statistician	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	1		
Senior Executive Service	2	5.7	"	"	"	"	2	5.7	35		
Administrative Service Officer (c) -											
Class 8	5	6.0	2	2.4	"	"	5	6.0	83		
Class 7	11	6.2	11	6.2	1	0.6	20	11.2	178		
Class 6	19	3.9	45	9.2	2	0.4	35	7.2	488		
Class 5	22	5.8	27	7.1	"	"	24	6.3	380		
Class 4	31	7.0	36	8.1	1	0.2	24	5.4	445		
Class 3	30	5.3	41	7.2	3	0.5	51	8.9	570		
Class 2	35	5.9	58	9.8	1	0.2	42	7.1	593		
Class 1	31	6.3	44	9.0	2	0.4	30	6.1	490		
Computer Systems Officer -											
Grades 4 and 5	1	2.6	2	5.3	"	"	4	10.5	38		
Grade 3	3	4.8	5	8.1	"	"	1	1.6	62		
Grade 2	21	16.7	11	8.7	"	"	4	3.2	126		
Grade 1	10	13.3	6	8.0	"	"	16	21.3	75		
Librarians	"	"	"	"	"	"	11	84.6	13		
Other classifications	"	"	2	3.8	"	"	2	3.8	52		
<i>Total paid operative and inoperative staff</i>	<i>221</i>	<i>6.1</i>	<i>290</i>	<i>8.0</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>0.3</i>	<i>244</i>	<i>6.7</i>	<i>1 599</i>	<i>44.7</i>	<i>3 629</i>
<i>UNPAID INOPERATIVE STAFF</i>											
	"	"	5	2.2	"	"	3	1.3	126	54.3	232
<i>TOTAL STAFF AT 30 JUNE 1988</i>	<i>221</i>	<i>5.7</i>	<i>295</i>	<i>7.6</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>0.3</i>	<i>247</i>	<i>6.4</i>	<i>1 725</i>	<i>44.7</i>	<i>3 861</i>

(a), (b) and (c) See footnotes to Table 5.2.

- Key:
- NESB1 - People with non-English speaking backgrounds, first generation
  - NESB2 - People with non-English speaking backgrounds, second generation
  - ATSI - Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders
  - PWD - People with disabilities

Note: EEO target groups are not mutually exclusive (eg an officer with a disability may also be from a non-English speaking background).

Source: ABS EEO database.

TABLE 5.5 ABS STAFF RESOURCES EMPLOYED UNDER THE CENSUS AND STATISTICS ACT 1905

Purpose	1986-87	1987-88
	Staff years	
Household surveys	228	217
1986 population census	1 100	1 328
<i>Total</i>		

TABLE 5.6 ABS INTAKE AND SEPARATIONS OF PERMANENT STAFF, 1987-88

<i>Method of intake and Type of separation</i>	<i>SES</i>	<i>Non-SES</i>	<i>Total</i>
	Number		
<i>INTAKE -</i>			
Appointment -			
Graduate	..	92	92
Non-graduate	..	183	183
Promotion or transfer from outside the ABS	(a) 1	159	160
<i>Total intake</i>	(a) 1	434	435
<i>SEPARATIONS -</i>			
Promotion or transfer to outside the ABS	(b) 1	124	125
Resignation	..	246	246
Retirement -			
Invalidity	..	7	7
Involuntary	..	5	5
Election by officer -			
Age 55-59 years	..	11	11
Age 60-64 years	1	6	7
<i>Total separations</i>	(b) 2	399	401

(a) In addition, 3 officers were promoted within the ABS from a non-SES classification to the SES. (b) In addition, 1 officer went on leave without pay in order to take up a post with an international organisation.

TABLE 5.7 ABS SENIOR EXECUTIVE SERVICE STAFF BY SALARY LEVEL, SEX AND LOCATION, AT 30 JUNE (a)

<i>Year and Location</i>	<i>Salary level</i>					<i>Total</i>		
	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>Men</i>	<i>Women</i>	<i>Total</i>
Number								
<i>1987 -</i>								
<i>Total at 30 June 1987</i>	<i>19</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>..</i>	<i>29</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>30</i>
<i>1988 -</i>								
Australian Capital Territory	17	1	6	1	1	25	1	26
New South Wales	..	1	..	..	..	1	..	1
Victoria	..	1	..	..	..	1	..	1
Queensland	1	..	..	..	..	1	..	1
Western Australia	1	..	..	..	..	1	..	1
South Australia	1	..	..	..	..	1	..	1
<i>Total at 30 June 1988</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>30</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>31</i>

(a) Operative substantive SES staff only.

TABLE 5.8 ABS SENIOR EXECUTIVE SERVICE, PROMOTIONS, 1987-88 (a)

<i>Salary level from which promoted</i>	<i>Salary level to which promoted</i>					
	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>Total</i>
Number						
Promotions within the SES -						
From level 4	..	..	..	..	..	..
From level 3	..	..	..	..	..	..
From level 2	..	..	..	..	..	..
From level 1	..	2	..	..	..	2
Promotions from non-SES levels	3	..	..	..	..	3
<i>Total</i>	3	2	..	..	..	5

(a) In addition, during 1987-88 one SES level 6 officer transferred to the ABS from another agency.

TABLE 5.9 ABS SENIOR EXECUTIVE SERVICE FULL-TIME STAFF BY SALARY LEVEL, AGE GROUP AND LENGTH OF SERVICE, AT 30 JUNE 1988 (a)

<i>Age group and Length of service</i>	<i>Salary level</i>		
	<i>1-2</i>	<i>3-6</i>	<i>Total</i>
Number			
<i>AGE GROUP (YEARS) -</i>			
Under 34	..	..	..
35-39	3	1	4
40-44	8	2	10
45-49	4	3	7
50-54	6	1	7
55-59	2	1	3
60 and over	..	..	..
<i>LENGTH OF SERVICE (YEARS) -</i>			
Under 5	1	..	1
5 and under 10	..	..	..
10 and under 15	1	..	1
15 and under 20	5	2	7
20 and under 30	12	4	16
30 and over	4	2	6
<i>Total</i>	23	8	31

(a) Operative substantive SES staff only.

## **Appendix 6 EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY IN THE ABS**

### **Status of EEO program and objectives**

The equal employment opportunity (EEO) program for the ABS was approved by the then Public Service Board in March 1987. The ABS is committed to the principle of equality of opportunity in all employment matters. In keeping with this principle, the ABS recognises that it is necessary to identify and remove all barriers (including historical barriers and attitudinal factors) that may inhibit members of staff from realising their full potential in the workplace. During the period from March 1987 to June 1988 considerable progress was made towards implementing EEO activities and fulfilling the ABS general EEO objectives which are as follows:

- Raise the level of awareness of all ABS staff to EEO principles and their application in the ABS.
- Ensure that all aspects of personnel administration and the application of conditions of service within the ABS are administered in such a way as to ensure equal employment opportunity is an outcome of such administration.
- Establish a system for monitoring the development, implementation and effectiveness of the EEO program in the ABS.

In addition to the general objectives, more detailed objectives have been established for equal employment opportunities for women and members of designated groups within the ABS. The objectives focus on creating opportunities for increased recruitment for members of EEO target groups and to create an environment providing for improved career opportunities in the ABS.

### **Resources**

The ABS originally designated a full time ASO 7 to coordinate the national EEO program. In addition, 40% of the time of an ASO 6 was allocated in each State Office and 25% of the time of an ASO 5 in the Northern Territory Office. All positions were initially filled by early 1987 and, although there has been some staff turnover during 1987-88, the full ASL was utilised. Responsibilities at Section level will be re-distributed in 1988-89. In Central Office the EEO Coordinator will also be responsible for a unit addressing industrial democracy and other personnel policies. In State Offices, units will also cover similar responsibilities.

The senior executive responsible for EEO in the ABS is the First Assistant Statistician, Coordination and Management Division.

### **Consultative mechanisms**

Under the auspices of the ABS National Consultative Council, a national EEO Sub-Committee has been established, together with State EEO Subcommittees or State Consultative Councils that have EEO as a standing agenda item.

The National EEO Subcommittee did not formally meet during 1987-88 although the need for a meeting was canvassed twice with the members. Many issues were resolved by informal consultation. Most State Subcommittees met quarterly and were seen to be effective in their role.

#### EEO database

The ABS is working towards a fully computerised personnel system and in the interim has established a separate database for EEO data. The first statistics from the database were disseminated throughout the ABS in early 1987 and were followed by an analysis which paralleled that produced by the Public Service Board for the Service-wide data. Two subsequent reports, *EEO Analysis of Job Level* and *Equal Employment Opportunity Promotion Rates* were also produced and distributed during the year.

#### Statistical data

Table 5.4 in Appendix 5 provides detailed statistics of EEO target groups within the ABS.

Summary statistics are shown in the following table.

ABS STAFF IN EEO TARGET GROUPS AT 30 JUNE 1988

	Number	% of total ABS staff
People with non-English speaking backgrounds	516	13.4
Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders	10	0.3
People with disabilities	247	6.4
Women	1 725	44.7

Note: EEO target groups are not mutually exclusive (e.g. an officer with a disability may also be from a non-English speaking background).

Women represent about 45% of the total ABS staff but tend to be concentrated in the lower level classifications. They comprise 75% of the total ABS staff in the ASO 1 category. Although there has been some increase in the number of women occupying senior positions up to ASO 8 during 1987-88 there has not been a significant change in the gender profile of the ABS workforce.

An analysis by the ABS Statistical Methods Section in August 1987 showed that women in the first 4 years of service had a better chance of promotion than men. The chances of promotion were greatest in the clerical administrative stream and least in the keyboard stream. (The implementation of the new office structures has of course dismantled these structures).

People from non-English speaking backgrounds, first (NESB1) and second (NESB2) generation, make up about 13% of the total ABS workforce and are reasonably well

represented at all classification levels in the ABS. The 1986 Australian census showed that the proportion of people who did not have English as their first language (NESB1) was 13%, while estimates of the proportion of people from non-English speaking backgrounds in total (ie NESB1 and NESB2) vary between 20% and 23%.

Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders represent 0.3% of the total ABS staff, and are spread across the ABS employment structure. The proportion of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders in the Australian population is about 1.3% (1986 population census). One of the ABS EEO objectives is to increase the recruitment of staff in this designated group.

People with disabilities make up 6.4% of the total ABS staff and are reasonably well represented at all classification levels of the ABS. Unfortunately this is such a diverse category of people that no meaningful comparison can be made with national figures.

#### **EEO-related grievances**

Australia-wide there were 2 EEO-related grievances by ABS staff during 1987-88; these were resolved internally. ABS staff had no grievances in the year that were lodged with an outside agency.

#### **Major priorities for 1987-88**

The major priorities for 1987-88 were:

- A major staff and management awareness campaign, including distribution of the EEO program and statistical reports.
- Consultation with line areas that have responsibilities for implementation of specific sub-objectives in the EEO program to ensure that implementation was proceeding satisfactorily.
- Increased Aboriginal recruitment into the ABS.
- Inclusion of EEO segments in all appropriate training courses.
- Inclusion of material on sexual harassment in all appropriate training courses.
- Enhancement and maintenance of the EEO database.
- Target group specific training programs in some ABS Offices.
- Management training for women.

#### **Significant achievements in 1987-88**

The major achievement has been the raising of EEO awareness by the inclusion of EEO principles in every relevant training course. Studies assistance has provided opportunities

for members of target groups to increase their skills. The personnel development component has offered a range of courses designed to open career opportunities to target group members. With implementation of the new office structures the number of development programs has increased to cater for the needs of the keyboard group. One State Office commenced a specialised "Women in Management Course".

Following the devolution of the Technical Equipment for Disabled Commonwealth Employees Program to individual agencies, the ABS set up a budget for the Program. During the year there were 10 purchases of equipment to help disabled officers.

#### **Monitoring and evaluation**

A major review of the status of the ABS EEO program was started in April 1988. The review demonstrated successes in the more concrete and easily assessable objectives, for example where procedures have been set in place to monitor probationary reports for designated groups and to discuss any problems with supervisors; and provision of a list of EEO readings in each ABS library. However the review highlighted problems in assessing the more subjective aims such as managers being attuned to the needs of their staff in the designated groups. The results of the review will be used to establish a revised EEO action plan, to be developed within the national EEO Subcommittee, for 1988-89.

#### **Priorities that were not achieved**

Despite an early decision to employ at least four Aboriginal people at the base grade in Central Office, recruitment proved impossible. This remains a high priority for 1988-89.

The inclusion of an increased number of women on senior management development programs was not achieved in 1987-88 and remains a high priority for 1988-89.

#### **Priorities for 1988-89**

The priorities for 1988-89 are:

- Review of the ABS EEO program. As noted above an EEO action plan is being developed for 1988-89.
- Office structures implementation. The successful implementation of the new office structures in the ABS is perceived as a strategic opportunity to significantly advance EEO in the ABS.
- Future advancement for women in the ABS. As noted above, the ABS wishes to increase the participation of women in management development programs during 1988-89.
- Aboriginal recruitment. The ABS wishes to increase the number of Aboriginals permanently employed in the ABS, and also to assist Aboriginal staff to compete successfully for promotion to above base positions.

- Support for staff with disabilities and from non-English speaking backgrounds. The ABS wishes to continue to support and promote the employment and training of people with disabilities and people from non-English speaking groups, thereby enhancing their career opportunities in the ABS.

### **Issues facing the ABS**

The issues facing the ABS are not unique within the Australian Public Service. The ABS is predominantly a professional organisation with a male dominated top structure which will take some time to change because of the relatively slow turnover at that level. The organisation will need to maintain a long term commitment to the development of people in target groups so that an adequate number of target group members will be genuine candidates for promotion to more senior levels. Aboriginal recruitment remains an objective for the ABS with all Offices determined to make progress during 1988-89.

The ABS strongly supports the concept of regional Service-wide EEO networks and will actively participate in them. It is hoped that effective networks will be established in all States and the Northern Territory during 1988-89.

### **Further information**

Further information and/or copies of the EEO program can be obtained from Mary Greig, EEO Coordinator, Australian Bureau of Statistics, P.O. Box 10, Belconnen, ACT 2616.

## **Appendix 7    FREEDOM OF INFORMATION STATEMENT**

As required by section 8 of the *Freedom of Information Act 1982*, the following statement is given about the structure of the ABS and how members of the public can gain access to information held by it.

### **ABS establishment, organisation and functions**

See pages 25 to 29 of this report.

### **Powers**

The decision making powers of the ABS and other powers associated with the discharge of its functions affecting members of the public are: the power to collect statistics including the power to appoint agents, to ask or require persons to provide information, and to enter into premises other than private accommodation for the purpose of collecting statistics; the power to initiate prosecutions against persons failing to supply information; and the power to publish statistics and release information.

### **Consultative arrangements**

See the references to the Australian Statistics Advisory Council (ASAC) and the annual Conference of Statisticians on pages 26 and 27 of this report.

### **Categories of documents**

Documents open to public access upon payment of a fee – the ABS does not hold these types of document.

Documents available for purchase or customarily available free of charge – see pages 39 to 44 of this report.

Other documents –

*Government and Parliament:* various policy-related documents; ministerial briefings; ministerial correspondence; replies to parliamentary questions; and tabling documents.

*Conferences etc:* agenda papers, submissions, and records of proceedings of internal and external conferences, management meetings, workshops etc.

*Statistical and statistical service projects:* research, development and evaluation papers; records of consultations with suppliers and users of data; statistical classifications; lists of businesses etc; maps; data collection, processing and publication manuals and instructions; mailing lists; statistical returns; and statistical data holdings.

*Administration and management:* work program and planning documents; finance, staff and establishment papers; personnel files; files relating to recruitment, selection and promotion of staff; staff development and training papers; office services documents; and tenders.

*General:* correspondence, papers etc filed by subject; manuals on more general subjects; reviews and administrative circulars.

### **Where to get information**

The ABS offers an initial contact point, for all requests for access to documents and information, by means of a central information service located within an Information Services Section in each of the ABS Central and regional offices, as listed below:

#### *Australian Capital Territory (Central Office)*

Telephone: (062) 52 6627, 52 6007, 52 5402  
Mail: PO Box 10, Belconnen ACT 2616  
Counter: Reception desk, Unit 5, Cameron Offices, Chandler Street, Belconnen

#### *New South Wales*

Telephone: (02) 268 4611  
Mail: GPO Box 796, Sydney NSW 2001  
Counter: 3rd Floor, St Andrew's House, Sydney Square, Sydney

#### *Victoria*

Telephone: (03) 615 7000  
Mail: GPO Box 2796Y, Melbourne VIC 3001  
Counter: Level 5, North Tower, Rialto,  
525 Collins Street, Melbourne

#### *Queensland*

Telephone: (07) 222 6351  
Mail: GPO Box 9817, Brisbane QLD 4001  
Counter: 20th Floor, 313 Adelaide Street, Brisbane

#### *Western Australia*

Telephone: (09) 323 5140  
Mail: GPO Box K881, Perth WA 6001  
Counter: Level 1, Hyatt Centre, 30 Terrace Road, Perth

*South Australia*

Telephone: (08) 237 7100  
Mail: GPO Box 2272, Adelaide SA 5001  
Counter: Ground Floor, Citibank Centre, 41 Currie Street, Adelaide

*Tasmania*

Telephone: (002) 20 5800  
Mail: GPO Box 66A, Hobart TAS 7001  
Counter: 1st Floor, 175 Collins Street, Hobart

*Northern Territory*

Telephone: (089) 81 5222  
Mail: GPO Box 3796, Darwin NT 0801  
Counter: 6th Floor, MLC Building, 81 Smith Street, Darwin

**Freedom of information inquiries**

All inquiries concerning access to documents under the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* may be directed on weekdays, between 8.30 am and 4.30 pm to the Assistant Statistician, Coordination Branch, Australian Bureau of Statistics, Room 4a602, Cameron Offices, Chandler Street, Belconnen, ACT 2617, telephone (062) 52 5256.

***Freedom of Information Act 1982 – ABS activities during 1987–88***

Facilitating access to available statistical information, subject to the confidentiality provisions of the *Census and Statistics Act 1905*, is a major function of the ABS and application of the provisions of the *Freedom of Information (FOI) Act 1982* within the ABS needs to be viewed against that background. The following table provides details of FOI activities during the years 1983–84 to 1987–88 inclusive.

FOI ACTIVITIES 1983-84 TO 1987-88

	1983-84	1984-85	1985-86	1986-87	1987-88
	Number				
<b>Requests received –</b>					
For statistical information	9	15	15	9	1
For personal papers	2	9	3	3	..
For administrative documents	5	5	5	6	1
<i>Total</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>29</i>	<i>23</i>	<i>18</i>	<i>2</i>
<b>Decisions made –</b>					
Access granted in full	6	14	7	9	1
Access granted in part	7	7	7	5	1
Request transferred to another agency	3	2	2	..	..
Request withdrawn	..	2	3	3	..
Access refused (a)	..	3	1	1	..
Documents not in existence	..	..	1	..	..
<i>Total</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>28</i>	<i>21</i>	<i>18</i>	<i>2</i>
Decisions outstanding at end of year	..	1	3	..	..
<b>Review of decisions by principal officer –</b>					
Decision upheld	1	1	2	..	..
<i>Total</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>..</i>	<i>..</i>
<b>Appeals to Administrative Appeals Tribunal –</b>					
Appeal disallowed	..	..	1	..	..
<i>Total</i>	<i>..</i>	<i>..</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>..</i>	<i>..</i>

(a) In accordance with the provisions of sections 38, 40, 41, 42, 43 and 45 of the *Freedom of Information Act 1982*

All of the requests were responded to within the statutory time limit. In 1987-88 the average time taken to respond was 22 days and a total of \$144.55 was collected in fees and charges.

Comprehensive information on the Act has been supplied to all ABS staff. Responsibility for matters relating to the operation of the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* within the ABS is exercised by the Coordination Branch in Canberra, and authority for decision-making under the Act has been delegated to the Assistant Statistician (a Senior Executive Service, Level 1 officer) in charge of that Branch. Officers of the Branch have continued to attend regular meetings of the FOI Practitioners' Forum and training courses run by the Attorney-General's Department.

Work entailed in implementing provisions of the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* during 1987-88 has engaged about half of the time of one middle-level officer during the year, plus the attention from time to time of a number of other officers – a total of somewhat less than one staff year.

## Appendix 8 DOCUMENTS TABLED IN PARLIAMENT: 1987-88

### Proposals for collection of statistical information

In accordance with section 6 of the *Australian Bureau of Statistics Act 1975*, the following proposals for collection of additional information for statistical purposes were tabled in both Houses of Parliament during 1987-88.

<i>Date tabled</i>	<i>Statistical collection</i>
14 September 1987	Survey of electricity and fuels. Survey of labour costs.
20 October 1987	Survey of textiles, clothing and footwear manufacturers.
12 April 1988	Annual collection of statistics on public sector indebtedness.
18 May 1988	Quarterly survey of balance sheet information. Survey of international trade in services.

Note: All the statistical collections listed were national projects.

### Disclosure of lists of names and addresses

In accordance with clause 6 of the Determination (Statutory Rules 1983 No. 19) made under section 13 of the *Census and Statistics Act 1905*, details of the following disclosures of lists of names, addresses and other information to the specified department or authority were tabled in both Houses of Parliament in 1987-88.

<i>Date tabled</i>	<i>Information released</i>
14 September 1987	Names and addresses of major mining, manufacturing and electricity/gas production establishments for the Bureau of Resource Economics.
16 September 1987	Names and addresses of Victorian State public sector agencies for Department of Management and Budget, Victoria.
16 February 1988	Names and addresses of agricultural establishments for Australian Meat and Livestock Corporation.
24 March 1988	Names and addresses of waterfront industry establishments for Inter-State Commission and Bureau of Transport and Communications Economics.
12 April 1988	Names and addresses of agricultural establishments for Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics.

## Appendix 9 EXTERNAL CONSULTANTS: 1987-88

	Expenditure
	\$
<b>PUBLIC RELATIONS, PUBLICATIONS AND MARKETING</b>	
<i>Consultants are used to supply specialist services, such as video production, researching, writing and designing promotional material and media liaison and awareness training, that cannot be supported on a full time basis by the ABS.</i>	
Croll Communications (Aust.)	
Media Monitoring	9 815
Frank Small Associates	
Market research for ABS daily publication	19 500
Maine Marketing Pty Ltd	
Public relations support and coordination for the launch of CDATA 86	19 474
Development of a sales and marketing plan for CDATA 86	5 000
Monitair Pty Ltd	
Media Monitoring	2 221
National Recording Studios	
Update graduate recruitment videos	6 821
Neilson, McCarthy, McIntosh and Parkes Pty Ltd	
Promotion of output from the 1986-87 agricultural census and the 1985-86 retail census	20 193
Professional Public Relations Canberra Pty Ltd	
Preparation of media statements and other material for 1987-88 agricultural census	16 546
Evaluate and report on effectiveness of schools booklet	2 760
Quadrant Research Services Pty Ltd	
Market research for ABS social reports	10 000
Reark Research Pty Ltd	
Market research for the <i>Queensland Year Book</i> (ABS Catalogue No. 1301.3)	15 900
1986 population census output attitude survey	25 422
Rowland Neilson McCarthy	
Promotion of the 1988-89 household expenditure survey	11 000
Touche Ross Pty	
Marketing advice on CD-ROM technology	8 065

\$

**Turnbulls ACT**

· Public awareness campaign for the CDATA 86 compact disk	7 800
· Production of a video on the CDATA 86 compact disk	12 983
· Promotion of the 1987-88 survey of motor vehicle usage	21 000
· Promotion of the 1987-88 services industries survey	9 750

**TRAINING**

*Consultants are engaged to conduct training presentations for ABS staff where insufficient expertise exists within ABS to provide the training, and for presentation of sessions by experts in specialist fields.*

**Australian Institute of Management Canberra**

· Development of customer service training package	5 845
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**Avonmore Nominees Pty Ltd**

· Facilitation skills workshop – Western Australian Office (a)	2 000
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**Bericco Consulting**

· Career path planning, goal setting, interpersonal communication and stress/time management workshops (a)	5 100
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**Centre for Brief Therapy**

· Assertiveness in the workplace courses – Queensland Office	2 150
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**Communication Research Institute of Australia**

· Forms design workshops	21 724
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**Cope Inc.**

· Self esteem and assertiveness and counselling techniques courses – South Australian Office (a)	1 900
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**Crawford and Associates**

· Seminars on implementing structural change, work design for managers, facilitation skills for managers and on-the-job training – Queensland Office (a)	7 000
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**Dorothy Outram**

· Effective writing workshops (a)	2 700
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**Effective Communication Training**

· Effective writing workshops (a)	2 500
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**Enterprise Australia**

· Introductory training program on total quality control for senior management	1 500
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(a) Training associated with implementation of new office structures.

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*Expenditure*

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	\$
Timothy Maher	
Fitness in the workplace workshops (a)	700
George Walker	
Stress management workshop - South Australian Office	1 890
Gillian Groom	
Training and provision of advice on healthy work practices - Tasmanian Office	1 500
Health, Media and Education Centre, New South Wales Department of Health	
Stress management course - New South Wales Office	624
Henry Price	
Interpersonal communication skills workshop (a)	1 800
Holistic Learning	
Office structures implementation training - Tasmanian Office (a)	2 700
Improved Communication Skills (Aust)	
Advanced reading skills course - New South Wales Office	2 250
Integra Pty Ltd	
Conflict management and interpersonal negotiations workshop - Western Australian Office (a)	}
Stress management workshop - Western Australian Office	3 156
Judith Bowler	
Career development workshop for keyboard staff (a)	4 200
OMNI Management Consultants	
Management development workshop - New South Wales Office	3 000
Management development workshop - Victorian Office	2 350
Ray Fells	
Negotiation skills workshop - Western Australian Office (a)	3 000
Ross Byrne	
Interpersonal communication skills workshop (a)	1 500
Touche Ross Pty	
Facilitator for senior management workshop	3 645
Val Noga	
Facilitator for middle management and advanced management workshops	18 100

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(a) Training associated with implementation of new office structures.

	\$
W. Cropper	
Facilitation skills workshop – South Australian Office (a)	6 459
W.E. and P.A. Cameron	
Career path planning, goal setting, interpersonal communication and stress/time management workshops (a)	3 400
<b>OTHER GENERAL CONSULTANCIES</b>	
<i>Consultants are used to provide expert advice and impartial review of ABS performance in specific areas of management and statistical operations.</i>	
Communication Research Institute of Australia	
Finalisation of forms design standards and guidelines	71 725
Compusystems	
Programming support services	180
Coopers and Lybrand	
Internal audit of Public Monies and Accounts for Payment areas in Victorian Office	10 500
Diana Killen Enterprises	
Review of ABS Library services and the resources needed to support them, with particular regard to automation	25 000
George P. Siokos	
Training needs analysis – South Australian Office	4 000
Integra Pty Ltd	
Implementation of a performance management scheme – Western Australian Office	11 630
O and O Systems Consultants Pty Ltd	
Development of ABS FINANCE System	133 650
Touche Ross Pty	
Internal audit of Public Monies and Accounts for Payment areas of South Australian Office	17 700
Slade Consultants	
Assistance in the recruitment of a Marketing Director	12 094
Vocational Rehabilitation Service	
Provision of occupational health service – Victorian Office	22 410

(a) Training associated with implementation of new office structures.

## **Appendix 10 ABS ACTIVITIES IN RELATION TO PARTICULAR GROUPS IN THE COMMUNITY, SUCH AS WOMEN AND MIGRANTS**

Statistics produced by the ABS, especially demographic, labour and social statistics, are relevant to the development of Government policies and programs for particular groups in the community, such as women and migrants, and to the evaluation of the effectiveness of the programs.

### **Advice to the ABS**

There are a number of mechanisms which provide for regular advice to the ABS about the interests of particular groups in the community in relation to the activities of the ABS. These include the Australian Statistics Advisory Council, user groups formed for the purpose of providing advice in regard to the development of specific areas of statistics, the ABS system of outpost officers to certain government departments whose functions involve the delivery of services to particular groups in the community, and other on-going contact maintained by the ABS with suppliers and users of statistics in various fields.

### **ABS activities and output**

#### *In relation to women*

Statistics produced by the ABS contribute substantially to meeting the information needs of those persons and organisations directly concerned with programs and policies affecting women. Statistics produced by the ABS which relate to people are normally shown separately for males and females. Gender is, in fact, the most common characteristic by which people are classified in statistical output.

Areas of concern in women's issues covered by ABS statistics include education, labour force participation and experience, earnings and hours worked, household income and expenditure, child care, families and health. Data are also available for particular groups in the community such as Aboriginals, migrants and aged and disabled people and the people who care for them. Furthermore, ABS social statistics publications often include special analyses relating to women.

The ABS has worked closely with the Office of the Status of Women on the development and maintenance of indicators to measure progress in the achievement of the objectives of the National Agenda for Women and on the development of relevant statistical collections including a pilot time use survey conducted in 1987. This survey measured daily activity patterns of men and women, including time spent on domestic activities. The results were published in *Information Paper: Time Use Pilot Survey, Sydney, May-June 1987* (ABS Catalogue No. 4111.1) in May 1988, and the ABS is continuing to assess the need for further surveys in this field.

ABS output makes a substantial contribution to the statistical needs of those persons and organisations directly concerned with programs and policies affecting migrants and people of non-English speaking background.

The ABS is currently preparing a major report entitled *Overseas Born Australians, 1987: A Statistical Profile*. This publication will draw together data from a range of surveys carried out by the ABS, most of which have been published in aggregate form elsewhere. The report will contain description, analysis and statistical tables covering topics regarding the life of overseas born Australians. The topics to be covered are families, health, education, working life, income and housing.

The ABS provides assistance to survey respondents of non-English speaking background. For instance, people skilled in community languages are employed as interviewers in the ABS monthly population survey. Where a respondent speaks a language not covered by the interviewer concerned, the services of a specialist interpreter are obtained. Further, instructions for completing the diary used in the household expenditure survey to be conducted during 1988-89 are provided in the major community languages. Responses will be accepted in languages other than English.

## Appendix 11 PROFESSIONAL PAPERS BY ABS OFFICERS: 1987-88

Officers of the ABS prepared the following professional papers which were presented or published during 1987-88:

D. Aitken: *Implementation of a Job Dependency Mechanism*. Presented to the Seventh Annual Conference of the Fujitsu Users' Association of Australia Inc., Brisbane, May 1988.

D.N. Allen: *Statistics for Managers*. Presented to the Gold Coast Chapter of the Building Owners and Managers Association of Australia Limited, Broadbeach, August 1987.

D.N. Allen: *Statistics for Use in Local Government*. Presented to the North Queensland Branch of the Institute of Municipal Management, Mackay, November 1987.

D.N. Allen: *New Strategies for Disseminating ABS Data*. Presented to the Queensland Chapter of the Australian Urban and Regional Information Systems Association, May 1988.

M. Anderson and B. Ross: *Labour Force Projections and Tables of Working Life: A Preliminary Investigation*. Presented to the Sixteenth Conference of Economists, Surfers Paradise, August 1987.

A.J. Barbetti: *Computer Systems for the Compilation of Australian Input-Output Tables*. Presented to the Annual Conference of the Australian and New Zealand Section of the Regional Science Association, Geelong, December 1987.

P.A. Bell and T. Dang: *Practical Issues in the Detection and Treatment of Outliers Using Winsorising*. Presented to the National Mathematical Sciences Congress, Canberra, May 1988.

D. Bennison and C. Bear: *The Use of Statistical Matching Techniques for Updating and Maintaining a Business Register*. Presented to the Fourth Annual Research Conference of the United States Bureau of the Census, Washington, March 1988.

J. Borowik: *A Postscript Device Driver for SAS/Graph Software*. Presented to the Annual Conference of the SAS Users' Group of Australia, Canberra, October 1987.

K.R.W. Brewer (a), M. Hanif (a) and S.M. Tam: *How Nearly Can Model-Based Prediction and Design-Based Estimation be Reconciled?* Published in Journal of the American Statistical Association, Vol. 83, No. 401, March 1988.

G. Brown and G.F. Lee: *A Practical Example of a Quality Improvement Program: Residue Testing in Australian Beef*. Presented to the National Mathematical Sciences Congress, Canberra, May 1988.

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(a) Not an ABS officer.

I. Castles: *Money Income Distribution and Redistribution in Australia, Sweden and the United States, 1984*. Presented to the Congress of the Australian and New Zealand Association for the Advancement of Science, Townsville, August 1987.

C.Y. Choi and L.T. Rusicka (a): *Recent Trends in Fertility and Family Formation*. Published in Journal of the Australian Population Association, Vol. 4, No. 2, November 1987.

C.Y. Choi, D.G. Steel and I. Castles: *Adjusting Census Counts for Under-Enumeration: the Australian Experience*. Presented to the Forty-sixth Session of the International Statistical Institute, Tokyo, September 1987.

C.Y. Choi, D.G. Steel and T.J. Skinner: *Adjusting the 1986 Australian Census Count for Under-Enumeration*. Presented to the Fourth Annual Research Conference of the United States Bureau of the Census, Washington, March 1988.

C.Y. Choi and D. Ward (a): *International Migration Statistics in Australia*. Presented to a Workshop on International Migration Data convened by the International Union for the Scientific Study of Population, Ottawa, November 1987.

P. Cox, T. White, A. Sutcliffe and C. Liles (a): *A Joint ABS/Fujitsu Prototype Expert System*. Presented to the Seventh Annual Conference of the Fujitsu Users' Association of Australia Inc., Brisbane, May 1988.

P. Cox, T. White, A. Sutcliffe and C. Liles (a): *A Joint ABS/Fujitsu Prototype Expert System*. Presented to the Fourth Australian Conference on Applications of Expert Systems, Sydney, May 1988.

B. Doyle: *ABS Small Business Statistics*. Presented to the Small Business Researchers' Conference, Brisbane, May 1988.

B.M. Fitzpatrick and N.R.J. Williams: *Experience with ADABAS at the Australian Bureau of Statistics*. Presented to the Forty-sixth Session of the International Statistical Institute, Tokyo, September 1987.

G.E. Griffiths and I.D. Phillips: *Small Area Estimation of Retail Commodity Sales in the 1985-86 Retail Census*. Presented to the National Mathematical Sciences Congress, Canberra, May 1988.

B.C. Hanslow: *Time Use Pilot Survey, Sydney, May-June 1987*. Presented to the International Association for Time Use Research, Budapest, June 1988.

M. Harrington: *Human Factors in Systems Analysis*. Presented to the Seventh Annual Conference of the Fujitsu Users' Association of Australia Inc., Brisbane, May 1988.

M. Jain: *Composite Estimate for Estimating Movement in Monthly Retail Sales*. Presented to the National Mathematical Sciences Congress, Canberra, May 1988.

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(a) Not an ABS officer.

M. Jain: *Purposive Sampling in the Australian Bureau of Statistics*. Presented to the National Mathematical Sciences Congress, Canberra, May 1988.

K. Kennedy: *Part-Time Employment Data*. Presented to a Seminar on Type and Conditions of Part-Time Work convened by the Women's Adviser's Office of the South Australian Department of the Premier and Cabinet, Adelaide, August 1987.

S. Linacre and D.J. Trewin: *Investigating the Accuracy of Preliminary Capital Expenditure Estimates*. Presented to the Forty-sixth Session of the International Statistical Institute, Tokyo, September 1987.

W. McLennan, W. Egan, R. Morcom and A. Paviour: *Development of National Statistical Capabilities: Data Processing*. Presented to the Seventh Session of the Committee on Statistics of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, Bangkok, November 1987.

E. Maitland: *Business Planning - How the Australian Bureau of Statistics Can Help*. Presented to a Seminar convened jointly by the ABS and the Capricornia Institute of Advanced Education, Bundaberg, November 1987.

J. Moore: *Graphit, An End User Interface to SAS/Graph*. Presented to the Annual Conference of the SAS Users' Group of Australia, Canberra, October 1987.

D.H. Osborne: *A Method of Confidentialising Microdata*. Presented to the National Mathematical Sciences Congress, Canberra, May 1988.

M. Sparks and G.F. Lee: *Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing at the Australian Bureau of Statistics*. Presented to the National Mathematical Sciences Congress, Canberra, May 1988.

D.G. Steel: *Multi Level Models and Ecological Analysis*. Presented to a Seminar on the Analysis of Survey Data convened by the Statistical Society of Australia, Canberra, November 1987.

D.G. Steel and P.T. Boal: *Characteristics of Households and Persons Not Accessible by Telephone in Australia*. Contributed to the International Conference on Telephone Survey Methodology, Charlotte, North Carolina, November 1987.

D.G. Steel and W. Cannon: *Rotation Group Effects in the Monthly Labour Force Survey*. Presented to the National Mathematical Sciences Congress, Canberra, May 1988.

D.G. Steel and R. de Mel: *The Contribution of Sampling Error to the Variability of Statistical Series*. Presented to the National Mathematical Sciences Congress, Canberra, May 1988.

J.H. Struik: *IRIS - The ABS Integrated Register Information System*. Presented to the Second International Round Table on Business Survey Frames, Washington, September 1987.

J.H. Struik: and G. Griffiths: *Register Data Quality Studies*. Presented to the Second International Round Table on Business Survey Frames, Washington, September 1987.

J.H. Struik and P.J. White: *Integrated Statistical Units Definitions*. Presented to the Second International Round Table on Business Survey Frames, Washington, September 1987.

S.M. Tam: *Some Results on Robust Estimating in Finite Population Sampling*. Published in Journal of the American Statistical Association, Vol. 83, No. 401, March 1988.

D.J. Trewin: *How Do We Reduce Non-Sampling Errors?* Published in Journal of Official Statistics, Vol. 3, No. 4, 1987.

D.J. Trewin: *Estimation of Trends and Time Series Models From Continuing Surveys*. Presented to the Forty-sixth Session of the International Statistical Institute, Tokyo, September 1987.

D.J. Trewin, G. Bode and P. Boal: *An Aid Analysis of Unemployed Youth*. Presented to a Conference on Youth and Unemployment convened by the Statistical Society of Australia, Canberra, May 1988.

D.J. Trewin and G. Lee: *International Comparisons of Telephone Coverage*. Presented to the International Conference on Telephone Survey Methodology, Charlotte, North Carolina, November 1987.

D.J. Trewin and E. Rapaport (a): *Using Encryption to Protect Confidentiality*. Presented to the Forty-sixth Session of the International Statistical Institute, Tokyo, September 1987.

G. Vaughan and C. Starrs: *Recent Developments in Statistical Data on Occupation*. Presented to the 1987 Conference of the Sociological Association of Australia and New Zealand, Sydney, July 1987.

B. Wilkins: *Planning for the Bundaberg Region - How Population Census Data Can Help*. Presented to a Seminar convened jointly by the ABS and the Capricornia Institute of Advanced Education, Bundaberg, November 1987.

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(a) Not an ABS officer.

*This is a case study reprinted from the August 1988 issue of Australian Capital Territory Public Relations News, a newsletter published by the Public Relations Institute of Australia (Australian Capital Territory). It is one of a series of case studies presented as special supplements to various issues of the newsletter. It was prepared by Mr Tom Parkes, Director of Public Relations, ABS.*

Trying to stop a damaging story that has more legs than a caterpillar is not an easy job. When the story's content includes sexual behaviour, compulsory blood tests and prying bureaucrats, the task is even tougher.

It was this job of damage control that the Australian Bureau of Statistics faced in May 1988.

The way the ABS found itself immersed in a problem and the way it attacked the solution provide some clear lessons in media liaison as a component of a public relations campaign.

### Background

In May 1988 the ABS was planning towards one of its regular health surveys which would begin in September 1989.

The health survey would ask Australians about their health, and provide some valuable indicators on the use of health services and the health risk factors associated with people's life styles. These indicators are critical for both the private and public sector in assessing the health needs and the health risk factors of Australians.

The ABS intended to adopt a low key approach directed at the people included in the survey, rather than at the media. Because only 14 000 people would be involved in the survey, the ABS was putting its effort into convincing people face-to-face through an interviewer that the survey was worthwhile.

In May, part of the consultative phase of the survey included the circulation to the health community of a number of documents. They included documents which:

- Raised the possibility of a non-compulsory physical examination as part of the survey. With the support of the National Heart Foundation, the examination would provide height, blood pressure and cholesterol readings. The physical examination could not be compulsory, but both the National Heart Foundation (which conducts regular similar surveys) and the ABS believed the physical data would provide a useful dimension to the health status of Australians.
- Listed the topics which many people wanted included in the survey – everything from questions about childhood illnesses to the use of condoms. This "wish list" had yet to receive any endorsement from the ABS.

## The Media Battle

On the first day of the media battle between the ABS and its critics, the Secretary of the New South Wales Council of Civil Liberties provided documents to the Sydney *Daily Telegraph* which he claimed were "leaked" and "confidential" on proposals for the health survey. According to the Council, the documents suggested that the ABS would include compulsory physical examinations (including blood tests) as part of the survey.

On that same day a senior ABS spokesman discussed the documents with the *Daily Telegraph*. He pointed out that the documents were not confidential and that any physical examination would be on a non-compulsory basis. In the main the documents canvassed options, not decisions.

The following day – and apparently undeterred by the facts – the Sydney *Daily Telegraph*, the Brisbane *Courier-Mail*, the Melbourne *Sun News-Pictorial*, and the Adelaide *Advertiser* all carried similar articles on page 1. The articles claimed under prominent headlines that the ABS intended the force thousands of people to undergo compulsory blood tests. The articles were all syndicated from the original "exclusive" *Daily Telegraph* article. The "Blood Census" was born.

Having seen the press coverage, the radio newsrooms and the morning television programs picked the story up and blitzed the ABS with questions and requests for interviews.

Early that morning the ABS adopted a two pronged response. It was to identify and make available senior spokesmen in Canberra and in each of the other capital cities, and, as soon as possible, issue a statement denying in detail the compulsory blood test claim.

The statement was not issued until late in the morning and by that time the issue was a major one in every capital city. The coverage focussed on the allegations, with the ABS denials running a poor second.

The media – particularly radio commentators – concentrated on the threats to privacy which the "Blood Census" represented. The flat denial that any kind of compulsory blood testing would go ahead was not allowed to interfere with what was certainly a very appealing story line.

In an attempt to peg out some factual claims, the ABS over the next two days wrote to the major dailies with a two paragraph denial of the blood test claims and put its case strongly on talk back radio, television news programs and in the press.

However statements by politicians and the withdrawal of the National Heart Foundation from the health survey gave the story more "legs" into the weekend. While the denials were gaining more space the issue appeared as if it would fade by the Monday.

On Sunday the New South Wales Council of Civil Liberties issued a second statement claiming that the ABS intended to ask questions on sexual activities and mental health matters as part of the survey. Again the statement was supposedly based on information from a "confidential" source and again the media were quick to accept another story.

On that day (Sunday) the ABS issued two statements, the first attacking the Council of Civil Liberties for creating "needless alarm" in the community and the second denying the claims about the inclusion of questions on sexual behaviour. Using facsimile and the AAP Medianet Service, the statements hit newsrooms around the country on the heels of the allegations. Again ABS spokesman were available and sought the opportunity to rebut the claims.

The following day (Monday) coverage of the allegations featured prominently in the Sydney *Daily Telegraph*, the Brisbane *Courier-Mail* and the Adelaide *Advertiser*. However other media reports – reflecting the denials of the ABS the previous day – were more balanced.

The matter became a Parliamentary issue the following day with questions and answers in the House of Representatives which had the effect of damping the story down. The ABS also made available to the media a copy of a detailed and critical letter from the Australian Statistician to the Council of Civil Liberties.

Coverage of the story dropped quickly away as the interest was now mainly in the ABS denials rather than the allegations.

### Results

One of the real problems in assessing the overall results and impact of an issue like the one described is that of measurement.

For the ABS, in terms of its stakeholders, three areas of measurement offer themselves:

- The impact can be measured in the media both through content analysis and through surveys of journalists' attitudes towards the ABS.
- The effect on respondents to the health survey can be measured when the ABS interviewers call on households.
- In the Parliamentary environment many indicators are available – including direct surveys – which will show whether support for the ABS has been affected by the media coverage.

While these measurements are underway it is obvious that the public standing of the ABS as a trustworthy statistical organisation must have been affected – at least in the short term.

On that basis, the ABS intends to take a complaint to the Australian Press Council against some of the metropolitan daily newspapers. The case will be based on the claim that while newspapers were well aware of the falsity of allegations, they continued to give the allegations page 1 prominence.

## Lessons

The lessons to be learned by public relations practitioners from the ABS experience are perhaps obvious, but worth noting:

- Never underestimate the ability of the organisation's opponents to fabricate and misrepresent facts. The ABS at the outset wrongly believed it was a player in a fair game against fair opponents. Neither of these assumptions was correct.
- The allegation is always makes better media copy in the media than the denial. Radio, particularly talkback radio, thrives on the spectre rather than on the reality.
- 8am is too late to be thinking about a response to that day's front page news. The radio agenda is set by 8am and, for morning television, the agenda is not set, but half completed, by 8am.
- Despite the claims to the contrary by the electronic media, the morning newspapers still lead the way in setting the news agenda.
- Be aware of the groupings of newspapers. An exclusive *Daily Telegraph* article is just as likely to appear in the same form in four other capital cities.
- The cost of a media battle can be expensive in terms of time. A high level group at the ABS spent the best part of an entire week putting out the media bushfire.
- The importance of a small coordinating group cannot be overstated. The group must have national access to all the information on the issue, direct the strategy and share the information quickly.
- Consistency is everything. Your spokesmen must be saying the same thing in every capital city. Ideally you should aim to produce the organisation's statement of its position first, so there is a common reference point for your media spokesmen.
- One spokesman is not enough in a major issue. The media will not wait in line for your lone spokesman. The ABS used one in each capital city and three in Canberra.
- Following the fluctuations in the battle can only be done through an efficient national media monitoring service. Without the service, you can only guess at movements on a national scale.